

## With pen and pencil on the frontier in 1851; the diary and sketches of Frank Blackwell Mayer

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*The Minnesota Valley of Traverse des Sioux*

*With Pen and Pencil on the Frontier in 1851*

*The Diary and Sketches of* FRANK viz BLACKWELL MAYER

*Edited with an Introduction and Notes by* BERTHA L ion . HEILBRON *Assistant Editor,*  
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### **Preface**

*Transition was the characteristic mark of the upper Northwest in 1851, when Frank B. Mayer, a youthful American artist, journeyed from Baltimore to the Minnesota frontier, recording his experiences and observations in a diary and drawing hundreds of sketches of scenes and persons. Minnesota Territory, a two-year-old infant, was growing lustily;*

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*the pioneer trek into the upper Mississippi Valley was gaining force; and white men were pushing the natives toward the setting sun. In Mayer's diary, here published with selections from his sketches, the reader is enabled to view this shifting mid-century scene through the eyes of a shrewd and talented contemporary observer.*

*The volume has a broad geographical sweep, for Mayer pictures in detail his journey from east to west. The goal of the sketching expedition was Minnesota, however, and both the diary and the sketches here reach the climax of their interest. Mayer portrays Indian life at Kaposia and he glances at old Fort Snelling, but his most memorable entries and sketches were made at Traverse des Sioux, crowded in the summer of 1851 with Indians, half-breeds, and viii whites. The drama of the day was the negotiation of an important land-cession treaty, but the artist had little concern for the details of treaty-making. He was intensely interested, however, in the Sioux and the half-breeds, their physique, their habits and customs, their traditions. He threw off his sketches rapidly, and his dairy consists for the most part of notes jotted down with small attention to the niceties of spelling and punctuation. If the narrative lacks polish, it offers, as compensation, savor, freshness, authenticity.*

*This volume may be taken as an illustration of the purposes underlying the Narratives and Documents series that it inaugurates. The series will be employed as a vehicle for the publication of diaries, letters, newspaper items, and other historical materials of distinct Minnesota interest. Less formal and comprehensive than the Collections, the volumes selected for inclusion in this series will be brought out in attractive and popular, though inexpensive, form.*

*To the acknowledgments that the editor makes in her introduction, the society desires to add a word of hearty appreciation. It feels deeply indebted to all who, through their courtesies and assistance, have helped to bring the project to fruition.*

Theodore C. Blegen Minnesota Historical Society St. Paul

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### **WITH PEN AND PENCIL ON THE FRONTIER IN 1851**

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#### **Introduction**

In the spring and early summer of 1851 the stage was being set in two-year-old Minnesota Territory for a tremendous drama, part of the great American epic of the retreat of the red man before the ever advancing wave of white settlement. This drama was to consist of three acts, which were to find their settings at three widely separated points in the vast

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frontier commonwealth—Traverse des Sioux on the Minnesota River, Mendota at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, and Pembina on the Canadian border. Although Minnesota Territory, which stretched from the Mississippi, the St. Croix, and Lake Superior on the east to the Missouri on the west, was established in 1849, only a small triangle between the St. Croix and the Mississippi was at that time white man's land; two years later the rest of this great western empire was still in the hands of Indians, Sioux and Chippewa. To extinguish the Indians title to much of the area, treaties were negotiated at the places mentioned above during the summer of 1851.

It is only with the first two acts of this Minnesota drama that the present volume is in any way connected. In 2 these the red actors were Sioux Indians—members of the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands living in the Minnesota Valley, who met to treat at Traverse des Sioux, and of the Wahpekute and Mdewakanton bands of the Mississippi Valley, who gathered at Mendota. Chief among the white actors were the commissioners appointed by the president to negotiate the treaties—Alexander Ramsey, governor of Minnesota Territory, and Luke Lea of Mississippi, United States commissioner of Indian affairs. Indians by the thousands assembled for the treaties; probably there were not a hundred white men present at either. Yet by the terms of the agreements that were drawn up and signed at Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, much of what is now southern Minnesota and vast tracts of land in Iowa and Dakota—an area estimated at thirty-five million acres—became part of the white man's domain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a compact account of the treaties of 1851, see William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 1:175-188 (St. Paul, 1921). "The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851, under Governor Alexander Ramsey, with Notes of the Former Treaty There, in 1841, under Governor James D. Doty, of Wisconsin," is the subject of an article by Thomas Hughes in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10:101-129 (part 1). Mr. Hughes has collaborated with Brigadier General W.C. Brown in the writing of a history of *Old Traverse des Sioux* which includes much material on the treaty (St. Peter, Minnesota, 1929). For a map showing the lands acquired by the treaties of 1851, see Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:324.

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Among those who were attracted to Minnesota in 1851 by news of the forthcoming treaties was a young artist of Baltimore, Frank Blackwell Mayer. He went, not to participate in the negotiations, but to observe Indian life at first hand and to find subjects for his brush and pencil. It may be that he hoped to become a second Catlin or to follow in the footsteps of Charles Bodmer or Seth Eastman. He had long felt that “in his choice of subjects for illustration an artist should select those peculiarly illustrative of the history of his own country.”<sup>2</sup> Where could one find distinctly American subjects better than among the red men of the West, who had not yet dropped their primitive mode of life? And how could one get in touch with the native Americans better than as a member of a government expedition? Such an expedition would afford protection and congenial companionship in regions that could not be reached conveniently by the independent traveler. As early as November 1, 1848, Mayer visited Washington to obtain an appointment as official artist to one of the government expeditions that were being sent into the West to explore new regions, establish forts, make surveys, or treat with the Indians. Interviews with a number of influential men and an application filed with the “office of the Topographical  
2 Mayer's Journal, 1847-54, p. 7. This manuscript journal, diaries of trips to Florida in 1852 and to Europe ten years later, some letters and other papers, a sketchbook, and a few drawings are among the Mayer Papers, in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. John Sylvester of Augusta, Georgia. Mrs. Sylvester is Mayer's stepdaughter. All the artist's papers that in any way relate to his western trip of 1851 have been place at the disposal of the editor through the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester. 4 bureau” failed to bring the desired appointment; positions as artists to western expeditions were not plentiful. When, in the early months of 1851, Mayer heard of the forthcoming Minnesota treaties, he hurried to Washington to apply for any position that might be open in connection with their negotiation. Once more he was disappointed—he was informed that all the positions had been filled. It was then that he wrote in his journal: “I have determined to undertake the trip at my own expense as the intercourse with the Indians and others, & the sketches I shall make will amply repay me for any expenditure I shall make.” While at Washington, Mayer was introduced to Captain Seth Eastman—a fortunate meeting, for this artist of



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Indian life had served earlier as commandant at Fort Snelling, and he was able to give his youthful colleague much information and advice about travel in the West and to furnish him with “many useful letters.”<sup>3</sup> Later, on May 2, Mayer met Governor Ramsey in Washington, and that meeting resulted in life-long 3 Journal, 1847-64 p. 43 102; Marcus L. Hansen, *Old Fort Snelling, 1819-1858*,<sup>62</sup> (Iowa City, 1918). In 1851 Eastman was engaged in preparing illustrations for Henry R. Schoolcraft's *History of the Indian Tribes of the United States*. In his journal, Mayer remarks that Eastman's sketches “are bea[u]tifully drawn and surpass his finished pictures”—a criticism that might well be applied to Mayer's own work. It is interesting to note that Mayer later contributed to Schoolcraft's work two illustration based upon the sketches made during his western travels. See *Indian Tribes*, 6: 352, 385 (Philadelphia, 1857). 5 friendship.<sup>4</sup> During the journey to the West that followed his visits to Washington, Mayer recorded his impressions “with pen and pencil” in a series of sketchbooks and a diary. With a sure stroke he pictured the scenes and inhabitants—red and white—of the frontier; with a fluent pen he described all that he saw through the sensitive eye of the artist. Perhaps no other observer, with the exception of Catlin, has left so interesting a record in two mediums of the Indians life of the Middle West. Mayer's diary, illustrated with selections from his drawings, forms the substance of the present volume.

4 Ramsey was in Washington on official business connected with the forthcoming treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota. A letter from I. Morrison Harris of Baltimore to Ramsey, indorsed by the governor “May 2/51, Introducing Frank Mayer Esq an artist of Baltimore,” is in the Ramsey Papers, in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. Harris informs Ramsey that Mayer's family holds the highest social position, and his Father Chs. F. Mayer Esq. is one of the most eminent members of our Bar.”

The artist and author whose work is published herewith was a member of a distinguished Baltimore family. His grandfather, Christian Mayer, emigrated from Württemberg in 1784 and engaged in the export business at Baltimore. His father, Charles F. Mayer, was a prominent lawyer, his mother, Eliza Blackwell, was the daughter of Captain Francis Blackwell, a commander in the merchant service. She named her first child, who was

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born on December 27, 1827, for her father, but he was generally known as Frank, and he almost invariably signed his name "Frank B. Mayer."<sup>5</sup> The boy grew up in pleasant surroundings; his parents moved in cultured circles; they entertained lavishly; and they frequently played host to writers, artists, and prominent professional people who chanced to visit Baltimore. Frank is said to have inherited his taste for art from his mother. Both parents seem to have encouraged him in the development of his talent, for he was allowed to study under a local artist of some fame, Alfred J. Miller, who had visited the Rocky Mountains in 1837 as a member of an expedition led by a Scotch adventurer, Sir William Drummond Stewart. Miller later prepared, from sketches made in the field, a series of eighteen paintings of scenes and experiences in the West.<sup>6</sup> It is more than likely that Mayer's desire to join a western expedition was derived from his teacher's tales of experiences as a member of the Stewart expedition.

<sup>5</sup> Brantz Mayer, *Memoir and Genealogy of the Maryland and Pennsylvanian Family of Mayer*, 36, 52 (Baltimore, 1878); Mantle Fielding, *Dictionary of American Painter, Sculptors, and Engravers*, 233 (Philadelphia, 1926); *Sun* (Baltimore), July 29, 1899. 6 In later years Mayer looked upon Miller's western sketches as "among the best ever executed," and he remarked particularly that the Indian sketches and paintings were "very valuable." See Mayer's Journal, 1847-54, p. 185, 188. For some information about Miller's adventures in the West and the Stewart expedition of 1837, see Henry R. Wagner, *The Plains and the Rockies*, 70 (San Francisco, 1921). Four portfolios of Miller's sketches were in the possession of Henry Walters of Baltimore in 1921. It is interesting to note that Walters at one time also owned some of Mayer's western drawings. See *post*, p. 21. 7

Mayer was not yet out of his teens when he began to support himself through his art. During the late summer of 1847 he was preparing a colored lithograph of General Taylor, which he sold to a Dr. Frost of Philadelphia on September 11 for fifty dollars—"my first earnings by my pencil." For some months he worked in Philadelphia, preparing illustrations, initial letters, and other designs for Frost's engravers. When Mayer left his first position on December 19 he felt that he had gained a "knowledge of the art of drawing on wood for engravers ... general information on subjects connected with Typography & engraving, & the information of *business habits*." Much of his later work of illustration must

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have been influenced by the training gained under Frost. During the winter he remained in Philadelphia, working for a time under an engraver for five dollars a week, and finally in April he returned to Baltimore. The summer of 1848 he spent at Pikesville, near Baltimore, resting, reading, studying botany and drawing, and recovering his health, which had been much impaired when he left Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Journal, 1847-54, p. 17, 22, 24, 28, 33, 34.

With the approach of autumn the young artist accepted a position as librarian of the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, an organization that his father and his uncle, Brantz Mayer, had helped to found in 1844. Despite his youth and lack of training, Mayer must have fitted well into his new <sup>8</sup> situation. He had the instincts of a collector; his habits, like those of his German forebears, were orderly; and he was deeply and sincerely interested in American history and in the past of his state and his city. The position gave him an assured income of a hundred and fifty dollars a year, and it left him with considerable leisure to pursue his profession. Such advantages notwithstanding, at the end of two years, on November 1, 1850, he resigned, feeling that the “further pursuit of my studies as an artist” had “become incompatible with the retention of that office.”<sup>8</sup> The true cause of his resignation, however, seems to have been the fact that he had found another source of income. In April, 1849, Mayer made a contract with Sidney Drake, a publisher of Hartford, Connecticut, by which he agreed to furnish about a hundred illustrations for a work on Mexico by Brantz Mayer. The artist looked upon this task as a “tedious & unimproving work,” but he rejoiced that it “put money in my pocket, (\$450.) which will enable me to pursue my studies more advantageously in future.” Young Mayer finished the Mexican drawings in February, 1850; within a month he began to take lessons in drawing from Ernest Fischer, a German artist then living in Baltimore. After giving up his work with the historical society he arranged <sup>8</sup> Journal, 1847-54, p. 41, 45, 77; Brantz Mayer, *History, Possessions and Prospects of the Maryland Historical Society*, 1, 2 (Fund-Publication, no. 1—Baltimore, 1867). <sup>9</sup> studio in his home and determined to “Work hard,” for, said he, “I *must* succeed.”<sup>9</sup>

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9 Journal, 1847-54, p. 50, 71, 74, 77. The first edition of Brantz Mayer's *Mexico; Aztec, Spanish, and Republican* appeared at Hartford in 1851. Most of the illustrations are unsigned, but a few bear the initials "F.M." This two-volume work, with Frank Mayer's illustrations, passed through several editions in the early fifties.

The money earned in illustrating his uncle's book also served another purpose for Mayer; it made possible a tour of the West at his own expense. With several hundred dollars at his disposal he was able, when he failed to secure a government appointment, to leave his native city on May 7, 1851, and to journey by railroad, stagecoach, and steamboat to the Minnesota country. At Fort Snelling, on June 29, he joined the commissioners who were bound for the scene of the treaty at Traverse des Sioux, a trading post and mission station near the site of the present city of St. Peter. In 1851 it consisted of "two log-buildings, used many years for the trading establishment of the Fur Company; three log building and two or three dilapidated stables" belonging to the resident traders, and the houses and schoolhouse of the mission. At this outpost of civilization Mayer had an opportunity to observe and mingle with thousands of Indians, many of whom had traveled to the treaty ground from the great buffalo plains to the west. According to one report the artist was very popular with the natives, since "next to painting 10 their own faces, the Indians seem to like to have their facts painted by others." Upon the conclusion of the negotiations at Traverse des Sioux, Mayer went down the Minnesota with the treaty-makers in a keel boat to Mendota, where he saw another gathering of natives and probably attended the signing of a second treaty on August 5.<sup>10</sup> The artist returned to Baltimore by way of the Great Lakes, Niagara Falls, Albany, and the Hudson River, apparently traveling in leisurely fashion during most of August, September, and part of October.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Journal, 1847-54, p. 102; *News* (Baltimore), March 2, 1895; *Sun*, July 29, 1899; James M. Goodhue, in *Minnesota Pioneer* (St. Paul), July 17, 1851; Mayer to Knute Nelson, November 4, 1893, Minnesota Historical Society Archives. Goodhue was the editor of the *Pioneer*; he was present at the treaty negotiations and his reports of the proceedings at Traverse des Sioux, in journal form, appear in the weekly issues of his paper from July 10 to August 7. The last three installments are unsigned and are probably the work of William G. Le Duc. The journal is substantially reprinted in the *Minnesota Year Book for 1851*, 27-70, compiled by Le Duc, and in Hughes and Brown, *Old Traverse des Sioux*, 33-73.

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Mayer is mentioned at several points in this journal. 11 The story of Mayer's journey to the West is covered in his diary and sketchbooks. His Sketchbook No. 45 contains a pictorial record of the return journey. A sketch made at Albany is dated September 15; one of the Hudson River palisades is dated October 4. See pages 23, 45. References to the route followed on this journey occur in the table of contents for an autobiography to be entitled "Bygones & Rigmaroles," for which a few chapters were written in 1896. These items are among the Mayer Papers. A record of expenses of the return journey appears *post*, p. 207.

After his western trip Mayer settled down to the life of an artist in his native city. His portraits and sketches had begun to attract attention, and he was becoming favorably known among his townsmen as a draughtsman; consequently he had "no fear of not gaining [a] livelihood" through his art. He illustrated 11 for his uncle a second work, *Captain Canot; or Twenty Years of an African Slaver*. Among the major works that he executed in the early fifties was a "portrait in crayon of Chief Justice Taney [which] is considered by himself and his family as the best likeness ever made of him." Mayer displayed his work at numerous local exhibitions; at one arranged by the Maryland Institute in 1852 he was awarded first premium for the best crayon drawings. He rented a room, furnished it as a studio, nailed his sign to the house door, and placed himself "before the public as an artist." He spent a winter in Florida and several summers at Pikesville; he purchased a horse and took long saddle trips into the country around Baltimore with his cousin Charles Mayer or with other friends and companions.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Journal, 1847-54, p. 87, 104, 105, 119, 200, 220, 270. Brantz Mayer's *Captain Canot* was published at New York in 1854. According to Frank Mayer, the hero of the book was "Capt Canneau, formerly an African slave-trader and a man of adventurous fortunes, and daring but not over scrupulous character." He is said to have changed the spelling of his name to protect his brother, who was "tried friend & confidential physician to Napoleon III." A volume based on Brantz Mayer's work was published with illustrations by Miguel Covarrubias in 1928.

In 1862 Mayer determined to leave Baltimore for that Mecca of American artists—Paris. There he entered the atelier of Charles G. Gleyre, a well-known <sup>12</sup> Swiss painter of historical subjects, and he also received instruction from the French artist, Gustave Brion. It was during this period that Mayer developed a style of painting figures that shows the

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obvious influence of Meissonier. He was constantly occupied with “orders from America,” and his works were accepted and exhibited at the Paris salons of the late sixties. For one picture—“The Nineteenth Century”—he received five offers while it was on exhibit at the salon of 1869. Summers in Savoy, a sojourn in Holland, and a visit to the ancestral home of the Mayers at Ulm added variety to the artist's European life. His peaceful and pleasant residence abroad might have continued indefinitely, had not the Franco-Prussian War interfered. The discomforts, not to mention the dangers, of life in besieged Paris caused him, on October 27, 1870, to abandon his studio containing his furniture, paintings, and studies, and to “avail himself of the last opportunity afforded by diplomatic negotiation to leave the beleaguered city in company with a brother artist, a Herald correspondent and two friends.” In a landau drawn by two horses, the party passes safely through the German lines and fled into Belgium. By way of Antwerp, London, Liverpool, and Ireland, the artist returned to America and Baltimore.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *News*, March 2, 1895; Mayer to Ramsey, September 6, 1869, Mayer Paper; Mayer to J Fletcher Williams, February 7, 1871, Minnesota Historical Society Archives. <sup>13</sup>

A short time later Mayer settled in the quaint old city of Annapolis, where he was destined to spend the remainder of his life. There in an old colonial house, which he dubbed the “Mare's Nest,” he lived, painting, drawing, and writing. His surroundings reflected his antiquarian interests, for his studio was littered not only with easels, paint, and drawing materials, but also with curios collected in odd corners of the earth. His interest in local history doubtless led to his election in 1886 as vice president of the Ann Arundel County Historical Society. In 1883 he married Mrs. Ellen Brewer. He died at his Annapolis home on July 28, 1899.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Herald* (Baltimore), April 5, 1896; *Sun*, July 29, 1899; Mayer to Williams, January 5, 1885 [1886], Minnesota Historical Society Archives.

Many of Mayer's best works, including the great historical paintings of the “Planting of the Colony of Maryland” and the “Burning of the Peggy Stewart” that adorn the Maryland statehouse, were executed during the Annapolis period. Some historical drawings of



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special interest were prepared as illustrations for a *Memorial Volume* issue in connection with the celebration in 1880 of the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Baltimore. In 1872 photographic reproductions of thirty of Mayer's *Drawing and Paintings* were published in book form at Baltimore. The artist spent long hours pouring over old Maryland newspaper, he dipped 14 into archives and family papers, he interviewed old residents of Annapolis and its vicinity. Sometimes he used the results of his researches in his pictures; sometimes he incorporated them into articles, a number of which appeared in *Harper's* and *Scribner's* magazines. His interest in the past of his locality is well reflected in these articles, in one of which he wrote: "Could we ransack the old garrets of Annapolis and unravel the threads of social history hidden in musty packages of family letters, we might weave many a woof of time and renew the life of the dead people whose ghosts still walk, they say, the old halls and chambers." Mayer furnished the material for a chapter on "Customs and Characters" in a *History of Annapolis* published in 1887.<sup>15</sup>

15 The subjects of Mayer's articles and the magazines in which they appeared follow: "Aunt Eve Interviewed," and "Old Baltimore and Its Merchants," in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 46: 509-517, 60: 175-181 (March, 1873; January, 1880); "Old Maryland Manners," and "Signs and Symbols," in *Scribner's Monthly*, 17: 315-331, 18: 705-814 (December, 1878; September, 1879). Each of the articles is profusely illustrated by the author. See Elihu S. Riley, *History of Annapolis*, j 122-146, for the chapter based of Mayer's notes. A paper dealing with the early German settlers of Maryland was read by Mayer before the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland on October 21, 1890. Daniel W. Nead, *The Pennsylvania-German in the Settlement of Maryland*, 57 (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1914).

During much of the later part of his life Mayer continued to be interest in Minnesota—the frontier land that he had visited in 1851. That interest was stimulated and kept alive by the hope that some 15 day he would be commissioned to paint a great historical picture of the signing of the treaty of Traverse des Sioux. His sketchbooks were crammed with drawings—actual portraits—of the commissioners and their retainers, newspapers correspondents, traders, half-breeds, Indians, and all the motley crowd that gathered at the little trading post on the Minnesota River to attend the making of the treaty. To supplement them,

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the artist had a vivid memory of the scene, with all its life and color. He had training and experience, his work had met with success. Who could be better qualified to perpetuate on canvas for the state of Minnesota one of the most important events in its early history? "An equally authentic record of early settlement cannot to belong to any of the older states," argued Mayer. "What would we not give in Maryland for a picture or even sketch made on the spot of the Landing of Leonard Calvert and his Indian treaty in 1634? So in Minnesota, the Indians in another generation will be gone # the desire to see how the founders of the state looked will become a matter of great interest." The preparation of a painting of the treaty of Traverse des Sioux would give Mayer an opportunity to execute what "would be really an *original American* work of Art." He hoped to make it "*the work*" of his life, his "crowning effort."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Mayer to Ramsey, September 6, 1869, Papers; January 10, 1871; to Harwood Iglehart, August 19, 1884; to Williams, January 5, 1885 [1886], Minnesota Historical Society Archives. Most of the items cited from the Minnesota Historical Society Archives and Executive Council Records and the Archives of the Board of Capitol Commissioners were located by Mr. Donald E. Van Koughnet, research and general assistant for the society. 16

The story Mayer's attempts to obtain funds for such a painting from the Minnesota legislature, through the Minnesota Historical Society, or by private subscription in Minnesota is a tale of unsuccessful efforts and frustrated hopes. As early as 1869, while he was still in Europe, Mayer conceived the idea of preparing the Traverse des Sioux picture and wrote about it to his old friend, Governor Ramsey, who was then serving as United States senator from Minnesota. He proposed to paint a canvas, about six by twelve feet in size, for the sum of ten thousand dollars. Ramsey called the matter to the attention of the Minnesota Historical Society, but he expressed grave doubts that the money could be raised. Shortly after Mayer's return to America, during the winter of 1871, upon the advice of Ramsey the matter was brought before the Minnesota legislature. Mayer had printed, for distribution among members of the legislature and the historical society, a memorial stating his qualifications and asking an appropriation of ten thousand dollars for a painting of the treaty. The memorial was presented to the legislature by no



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less a person than Henry H. Sibley, pioneer furtrader, representative of the territory in Congress, and first governor of the state. Mayer himself, again 17 on Ramsey's advice, made what he described as a "fatiguing journey" to St. Paul in order to appear in person before the legislature. But all his efforts were for naught; the Minnesota legislature of 1871 did not see fit to spend ten thousand dollars on an oil painting. Even after Mayer returned, disappointed, to the East, he still hoped that the money might be raised by private subscription. In addition to Ramsey, who promised to give "\$100 or even \$200 if necessary" for the cause, Mayer enlisted the interest of J. Fletcher Williams, secretary of the historical society, Henry M. Rice, Captain Russell Blakeley, and Edward D. Neill.<sup>17</sup> But the money was not forthcoming, and, in the summer of 1871, the matter was temporarily dropped.

17 Mayer to Ramsey, September 6, 1869, Mayer Papers; Lewis Mayer to Ramsey, April 1, 1870, with Ramsey's indorsement; Mayer to Ramsey, January 10, 1871; Ramsey to Williams, January 17, 1871; Mayer to Williams, February 7, March 8, 27, April 21, 1871, Minnesota Historical Society Archives; Ramsey to Mayer, February 19, 1871; Williams to Mayer, March 21, April 24, May 17, 1871; Rice to Mayer, May 2, June 7, 1871, Mayer Papers; Minnesota, *House Journal*, 1871, p. 142, 164. On November 23, 1893, Mayer wrote to William R. Marshall: "I visited the Legislature once at Gov r Ramsey's suggestion but their preoccupation & my lack of a 'political pull' postponed action, & it has kept postponed ever since." Minnesota Historical Society Archives.

Interest in Mayer's proposed painting was, however, to be revived. In the fall of 1880 members of the executive council of the Minnesota Historical Society decided to memorialize the legislature for a grant and in January, 1881, Mayer agreed to paint the picture 18 for eight thousand dollars. Some three years later he was ready to reduce the price to three thousand dollars. "This is very cheap for such a work but I am anxious to do it as one of the *completed projects* of my life," wrote the artist. A committee of the historical society was appointed to devise ways to raise the latter sum. During the session of 1885 a bill ordering the painting was introduced in the senate, but it failed to pass. In the hope that the money might be raised by private subscription, members of the historical society's committee asked Mayer to prepare a "rough sketch, or design of the picture, so as to

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give us some idea of what he proposes to execute.” Victory seemed to be in sight at last. Mayer, much encouraged, spent three months working out in color a “study for the whole scheme of the compositions.” On January 5, 1886, he sent the sketch to Williams. He expressed the hope that it would “be understood that this is only a sketch,” and that in the finished picture the figures would “be large enough to give the *likeness* of the individuals and the details of Indians costume.” He asked that Williams “carefully guard this work that no one may make a drawing from it or ‘steal my thunder.’” But even with the sketch before them, members of the executive council, after some deliberation, decided that they could not procure funds for the larger picture. It was then that Mayer, disheartened, offered to sell the sketch for two hundred

### *The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux*

Frank B. Mayer

19 dollars. The offer was accepted by the executive council at its meeting of May 10, 1886.<sup>18</sup> Mayer's sketch in oil of the signing of the treaty of Traverse des Sioux still hangs in the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>18</sup> Minnesota Historical Society, Executive Council Minutes, September 13, 1880, January 17, 1881; October 13, 1884; February 9, April 13, 1885; April 12, May 10, 1886; Mayer to Williams, September 3, 1884; March 19, June 23, 1885; January 4, 5, March 5, April 17, 1886; January 31, 1887, Minnesota Historical Society Archives; Minnesota Historical Society *Biennial Reports*, 1885, p. 16; 1887, p. 18.

Mayer made one more feeble effort to obtain an order from the state for a large picture. In 1893, when he heard that Minnesota was about to build a new and magnificent capitol, he wrote to Governor Knute Nelson and proposed that he be allowed to develop his sketch to fill a “panel on the walls of your new state House.”<sup>19</sup> But his proposal was premature. Ten years were to elapse before subjects for the paintings and murals in the Minnesota Capitol were assigned to some of American's most talented artists. By that time Mayer had died, and it remained for another artist—Frank D. Millet—to execute the picture that Mayer had so ardently longed to paint. The suggestion that a painting of the treaty be included among

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the Capitol decorations 19 Mayer to Nelson, November 4, 1893; to Marshall, November 23, December 1, 1893; Nelson to Mayer, November 18, 1893; to Marshall, November 18, 1893, Minnesota Historical Society Archives; Minnesota Historical Society, Executive Council Minutes, December 11, 1893. 20 came from the historical society. When Cass Gilbert, the architect, commissioned Millet to paint the picture for four thousand dollars he specified that it should “in its general composition, follow a sketch which was made by Mr. Mayer ... who was present at the time,” and he furnished the artist with a photograph of Mayer's work. For the picture that now decorates the governor's reception room, Millet wisely adopted Mayer's design, though he changed the composition somewhat. Gilbert expressed himself as “very enthusiastic over the result.”<sup>20</sup>

20 *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 24, 1903; Cass Gilbert to Channing Seabury, April 21, May 6, 12, November 16, 1904; to Frank D. Millet, May 6, 1904; Millet to Gilbert, July 12, 24, 1905. The letters cited are among the Archives of the Board of Capitol Commissioners, in the custody of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Another matter that Mayer made repeated attempts to push with the historical society was the sale to that organization of the diary and sketch-books prepared during the journey of 1851. In 1871 he called Ramsey's attention to them and suggested that a “volume composed of the journal with water-color drawings worked out from the sketches might be a very valuable contribution to the permanent records of the state and of the Historical Society.” He offered to transcribe the journal and prepare the drawings for two thousand dollars. It was in 1884 that Mayer first suggested that the society publish his travel diary of 1851, “with the original drawings made at the time as illustrations.” The photo-engraving process was being perfected at the time, and the artist found very pleasant the idea that his “drawings could be photographed *on the block* and so engraved of any size & be fac-similes of the originals.” He suggested that the volume might be called “The Treaty of Traverse-des-Sioux—from the pen and pencil of an Eye-witness.” Considerable interest in its possible publications was aroused among members of the society's executive council, and in 1887 Mayer was asked to send the journal and sketchbooks to St. Paul for inspection. He refused to risk sending the sketches, “as their loss would be absolute

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if accident befell them,” but he did send three volumes of his manuscript diary, with suggestions for its illustration.<sup>21</sup> The society seems to have decided not only against its publication, but also against its purchase, for there is evidence that Mayer had the diary in his possession when he died in 1899. At that time he was engaged in preparing, for Henry Walters, a Baltimore collector of art works, 21 Mayer to Ramsey, January 10, 1871; February 15, 1887; to Williams February 11, 1871; September 3, 1884; January 14, 1885; March 5, April 17, 1886; January 31, April 21, 25, June 18, 1887, Minnesota Historical Society Archives. Mayer also attempted to interest the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Lennox Library of New York in the purchase or publication of the journal. The Smithsonian Institution offered to publish it, but could give the artist no remuneration. Mayer stated that he had had other opportunities to dispose of the diary, but he felt that “it certainly should belong to Minnesota.” Mayer to the librarian of the Wisconsin Historical Society, September 20, 1882; to Williams, January 31, 1887; to Ramsey, February 15, 1887, Minnesota Historical Society Archives; undated draft of letter to James Lennox, Mayer Papers. 22 a series of water-color drawings based on his sketches. Thirty-one drawings were completed when the artist died. With them Walters seems to have acquired a transcript of diary.<sup>22</sup> Fortunately the original diary and sketchbooks have been preserved. Shortly after Mayer's death they fell into the hands of that great collector of Americana and materials relating to the American Indian, Edward E. Ayer, and they are now in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library at Chicago. It is through the courtesy of this 22 An account of the collection acquired by Walters, with reproductions of five water-color sketches, appears in the Sun for May 11, 1903. This newspaper announces that Walters had presented the drawings to Goucher College, and it includes a list of their titles. The donor had in his possession at the time “three volumes of carefully prepared notes on the Sioux and on the incidents of the journey” that Mayer made to Minnesota in 1851, and these he lent to the college. From them a transcript was “made to accompany and explain the collection of sketches.” In 1932 the Goucher College authorities were unable to locate either the drawings or the copy of the “notes” that accompanied them. Some extensive quotations from these notes, published in the Sun, indicate that the volumes owned by

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Walters contained transcripts made by Mayer from his original diary. The artist had made certain minor additions to the text, and he had greatly improved the language. Walters died in 1931, leaving his art gallery to the city of Baltimore. According to its superintendent, Mr. James C. Anderson, Walters' copy of the Mayer diary was "caught in the Baltimore fire of 1904." A copy of a letter from Mr. Anderson was inclosed in a letter from Miss Katherine Jeanne Gallagher, professor of history at Goucher College, Baltimore, to the editor, March 3, 1932. Miss Gallagher has given freely of her time in an effort to locate any Mayer material that may exist in Baltimore. 23 library that the Minnesota Historical Society is privileged, after the lapse of a generation, to carry out Mayer's wish by publishing his diary with selections from his sketches.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The bulk of the present narrative has never before been published. The portion of the diary dealing with Mayer's experiences at Traverse des Sioux from June 29 to July 18, comprising about a third of the text, is printed in Hughes and Brown, *Old Traverse des Sioux*, 79-96; and reproductions of a number of Mayer's sketches are among the illustrations in that volume.

The Newberry Library has five of Mayer's sketchbooks, bearing the numbers from 40 to 44, and containing nearly five hundred pages of drawings. The first includes pictures of the Missouri frontier and Byrneham Wood, sketches made along the Mississippi, and a large number of drawings made at St. Paul and Kaposia. The others are made up of sketches executed for the most part at Fort Snelling, Traverse des Sioux, and Mendota. The last book in the series bears the date July 28, 1851, and is made up almost entirely of pictures drawn at Mendota. A sixth sketchbook, number 45, is among the Mayer Papers; this includes a few Minnesota sketches and a great number made during Mayer's return trip to the East. In addition to the sketchbooks, the Ayer Collection has about sixty-five separate drawings in pencil, a water-color sketch of a group of wigwams, and two Indian heads in oil by Mayer. Among the drawings are fourteen large ones, far more finished in style than other sketches in the collection. It may be surmised that these were prepared as illustrations in the days when Mayer hoped to publish his diary through the Minnesota Historical Society.

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The diary, which covers the dates from May 7 to July 18, 1851, is written in two small leather-bound notebooks and six unbound booklets of sixteen pages each. The booklets are lettered A to F and are paged separately in pencil.<sup>24</sup> The first bound volume is written on right-hand pages until the end of the book is reached; then it is reversed and carried back to the front. The second volume, the right-hand pages of which have been numbered in pencil, is written on right-hand pages only, except for the last portion, which is reversed and carried back to a page facing page 56. The text of this volume has been greatly elaborated by the addition of notes written on the left-hand pages. The fragments that make up volume 3 present a difficult problem. In 1887 when Mayer sent his diary to St. Paul for examination it was made up of three bound volumes. The last of these must at some later time have been taken out of the binding and separated into sections. <sup>24</sup> A photostatic copy of the diary and photostatic or photographic reproductions of about a hundred and forty of Mayer's drawings are owned by the Minnesota Historical Society. The editor visited the Newberry Library in December, 1931, to examine the original Mayer diary and sketches. She wishes to acknowledge the courtesy and coöperation of Mr. George B. Utley, the librarian, and Mrs. Ruth L. Butler of the Ayer Collection, in placing these materials at her disposal. <sup>25</sup> Since the text ends abruptly, the question whether or not any portion of the original narrative is missing naturally arises. A list of proposed illustrations that once was at the end of volume 3 is lacking. More serious, however, is the fact that the last entry is dated July 18, the day that the treaty negotiations opened at Traverse des Sioux, although Mayer made scores of drawings later. Was the artist so busy with his pencil after that date that he had no time to write in his journal? Or has his word picture of the treaty negotiations been lost? In 1893 he himself asserted that he had "an accurate journal of all that transpired ... on the *two* treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota illustrated by sketches made on the spot." Once when Mayer felt that the value of his writings and sketches was not appreciated he wrote: "Perhaps if I did as the old Sibyl did and burnt them by degrees they would become of value."<sup>25</sup> Did he himself actually destroy part of his diary? It is a matter of regret that his accounts of the treaties of 1851, if they ever were written, are not available for publication in the present volume. On the other

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hand, it must be remembered that Mayer went to Minnesota to satisfy a visual craving—to see at first had the natives, their villages, their costumes, their utensils, their dances, 25 Mayer to Williams, April 27, 1886; April 21, 1887; to Ramsey, February 15, 1887; to Nelson, November 4, 1893, Minnesota Historical Society Archives. 26 their feasts, their ceremonies—rather than to learn how the Great Father at Washington dealt with his red children and bought their fertile prairies and their rich woodlands for a few cents an acre. It is just possible that the artist's overwhelming interest in the natives accounts for the fact that the emphasis in his diary is on Indian life and that the treaties of 1851 are neglected.

In the editing of the diary, the original form has been followed closely. Mayer's spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been reproduced throughout. In the interest of readability, however, the narrative, which in the original is not paragraphed, was broken up into paragraphs and divided into chapters by Words or passages crossed out by the author are omitted unless they contain significant information not otherwise included, in which case they are inclosed in brackets and followed by footnotes explaining that Mayer intended to omit them. Brackets with appropriate footnotes also have been used to indicate material added in pencil or to inclose passages added by the diarist on pages facing the regular text of the original diary. The editor is responsible for the placing of such passages. Whenever possible, the editor has supplied the full names of people mentioned in the diary, using brackets to indicate the portions supplied. On the inside covers and the first and last pages of the two bound volumes of the diary, 27 Mayer wrote lists of names and addresses and other bits of information that have no direct connection with the adjoining text. Such lists have been printed at the end of the narrative with accompanying footnotes to show their locations in the original diary.

Bertha L. Heilbron Minnesota Historical Society St. Paul

29

### **I Down the Ohio to Cincinnati**



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May 7<sup>th</sup> 1 "Fare well" from Chris & Charly<sup>2</sup> and an agreeable conversation with Capt Hill of the army as far as Elicotts mills were the last links to bind me to home Elicotts mills and its neighborhood afford ample study for an Artist & indeed from this point until reaching Union P a the scenery increases in interest, varying from the elegant and semicultivated hills of Elicotts Mills & Frederick county to the grandeur and wildness of the untouched Alleghanies. At the point of Rocks & Carroll's Manor we first see the Mountains 1 At the foot of the page on the inside front cover of the first volume of the diary, is the following notation: *Memoranda &c.* Journey from Baltim[or]e to St. Paul's Minnesota. May 7 to June 20<sup>th</sup> 1851." It evidently was written after the last entry was made in the volume. 2 Charly and Chris probably were the artist's cousins, Charles Frederick and Christopher Lewis Mayer, the sons of Lewis C.Z. Mayer. In later life Charles became a successful and prominent Baltimore business man; from 1888 to 1896 he was president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. See Journal, 1847-54, p. 148, 168; Mayer, *Genealogy*, 49, 51. Christopher is listed as the owner of several of Frank's paintings in the index to the latter's *Drawings and Paintings*. 30 forming grand & solemn lines of back ground to the cultivated farms of Frederick [County]. The windings of the Potomac through the thickly wooded gorges of the mountains afford passages of great beauty.

At Cumberland we took the stage<sup>3</sup> in company with two women with children to watch, two young women who carried individually a poodle & collectively a large parrott in a correspondingly combersome cage. An old gentleman, whose attentions to the young ladies aforesaid can only be excused on the ground of unexampled verdancy. [Want of self-respect in those whom we are naturally induced by their venerable appearance to respect leave[s] a mingled feeling in the mind of contempt & sorrow. As to the young women, it need only be said that loss of modesty in women is loss of all that renders her attractive especially if sensuality adds to our disgust.]<sup>4</sup> [Rev d ]<sup>5</sup> Mr Balentyne of Washington, & an intelligent & educated man, & a merchant Mr Goss, a fine specimen of the honest, frank & persevering Western man completed our stages compliment.



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3 Mayer traveled as far as Cumberland on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which was completed only to that place. Mayer to Williams, April 21, 1887, Minnesota Historical Society Archives. 4 The passage inclosed in brackets is crossed out with pencil in the original. 5 This word is added in pencil.

The Narrows above Cumberland being the passage for Wills' creek thro' the mountain. This is 31 wild, grand & stupendous. The rocks on either side rising to many hundred feet & crowned & interspersed with pines & other trees. The great variety of tints produced by the coming leaves mingled with the sober masses of as yet leafless giants of the forest all harmonized by the clear mellow tone of a golden sunset, the mighty shadows cast by the riven mountain & the magnificent repose of the whole scene absolved all feelings of self in admiration of this beautiful work of nature. Further on the mountains increase in loneliness & wildness the marks of elemental strife being evinced in the decapitated tree tops & shattered trunks. Many twisted & turned from their wonted straitness 'ere they had acquired strength to resist the violence of the storm. Added to this was the mystical effect of the moonlight.

The indistinct distinctness of moonlight has always something peculiarly mysterious and solemn in it but when this is exhibited in such a theatre as the mountains of alleghany present, the grand & massive mountain ranges the skeleton trees shattered by the storm, interspersed with hardy pines of appalling height. The rocks & twisted roots casting fantastic & suggestive shadows. Shadows "of things unseen" more evident than substance, altogether formed a scene portentous & mystic. The moon setting at one o'clock[,]  
Starlight, & the chill of morning succeeded. Day dawned gradually and beautifully & taking a seat by the driver I enjoyed the perfection of transportation 32 portation thro' a most beautifully picturesque country.

Walking up Laurel Hill with my fellow travellers we looked *down into* forests unmutilated by the hand of man. The view from the summit is one of the most extensive probably in the country commanding a great extent of mountain view[,]  
Uniontown & Brownsville being seen beneath. Breakfasting at Uniontown we pass on to Brownsville thro' a cultivated

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& undulating country. In these places that effect of the general use of Bitumenous coal is apparent which renders Pittsburg & all places where it is used exclusively & in large quantities so disagreeable a place of residence investing everything & insinuating itself into every crevice and spot no matter how retired or secured, it constitutes an atmosphere of dirt & dust.

The Monongahela river is elegant in its scenery without possessing the grandeur of the mountains or the more cultivated character of the homes of succeeding Anglo Saxon generations.<sup>6</sup> Here the Steamers & Craft peculiar to the Western waters first present themselves. A strange feeling of contempt was the first impulse on beholding these “freshwater” craft and Sailors. Always accustomed to consider the steamer but a modification of the ship the appearance of a combination of improved chicken 6 Mayer seems to have left stage at Brownsville on the Monongahela River and to have proceeded by steamboat. 33 coops & teackettles *slipping* down a waveless stream & managed by men half sailors half machinists, lacking all the peculiar freedom of motion & hardy, salty, appearance of our old Tars of the seaboard struck me as a “decided failure”, [“]small potatoes.” Added to this the whole concern seems to be perpetually labouring under the effects of an “awful cough” which it in vain endeavours to get rid of. This state of the system developes itself in a decided system of ague & fever shaking and stewing the whole affair.

At *Pittsburg* any one with ordinary propensities to cleanliness are at once shocked by the coating of coal dust in which every thing is enveloped. The inhabitants are employed as it wer[e] in the Sysiphian labour of keeping themselves clean—& altho' the majority seem long since to have relinquished the task as hopeless and have turned their attention to combating the elements in another form, reducing them to subjection and use in the form of various articles of glass & iron, manufactures for which the city is famous. forty iron furnaces & thirty five glass-houses belch forth continuous volumes of bitumenous smoke. Beside Iron & glass there are factories of Salt, copper, & cotton The internal improvements connected with Pittsburg are numerous & very substantially constructed. With Miss Helen

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Dunloss a talented & amiable young lady I visited the hill on the opposite side of the river (Coal Hill)—which commands a very extensive view of the city & surrounding country.<sup>7</sup> Mr Baum also was extremely kind & attentive.

<sup>7</sup> Miss Dunloss returned Mayer's visit in the summer of 1854. Journal, 1847-54, p. 220, 254, 266.

Altho' at first sight rather prejudiced against the steamers, since becoming a passenger on board the Messenger, I have become more reconciled & have found *poetry & pictures* here as elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> Our faith in the ideal world is strengthened when occasionally there flit across our path faces & forms expressive of the most attractive & endearing feelings. Such was a face I saw to day in company with others probably her relatives all apparently possessed of the same attractive qualities. Fair lady we may never meet again but—I should like deucedly to pain you. It is not in the cabin among our friends of the first class alone that we are to see the expression of the beautiful & affecting, but descend to the deck of the steamer & after contemplating that wonder of human ingenuity the steam engine—"go aft" to the groups of emigrants. Here, a german family, the old man & frau, & his pretty daughter, of whom I got a sketch by stealth.<sup>9</sup> The modesty of the girl the dignity & matronly consequence of the mother the determination & tranquillity of the old man & the hopeful countenance <sup>8</sup> The "Messenger" was a steamboat of the Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Packet line. A picture of this boat appears in Charles H. Ambler, *A History of Transportation in the Ohio Valley*, 174 (Glendale, California, 1932). <sup>9</sup> The sketches mentioned here are not in the Ayer Collection or the Mayer Papers. 35

The Mississippi Valley from Pilot Knob St. Paul appears in the distance.

36

Sioux Evening Meal, Traverse des Sioux

<sup>37</sup> of the ruddy youth who helps himself from the well stored oaken chest of ample family dimensions to his allowance of brown bread & sausage forms a domestic picture of rare beauty. Near this group is a daughter of Erin with her raven looks disordered & her

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large dark eyes glazed with the bursting tear as resting her head between her hands she watches with a mother's anxiety the sick child extended on the birth *[berth]* or rather shelf before her. The father is there too, his interest divided between the mother & his child. The numerous groups of [other emigrants with their]<sup>10</sup> children, the rude boatmen engineers & modern cyclops of the boilers give ample employment to an artist or student of nature—should he neglect to look upon the beautiful scenery of the Ohio.

10 The passage in brackets is crossed out in the original diary.

[Seated on his chest which contains his all & that of his faithful grandson is an old blind man, whose only consolation for the loss of the most pleasurable of the senses, consists in enjoying the melody of sound which he draws with surprising skill from the strings of an old violin. His face bears an exp[r]ession of quiet, & beautiful resignation with a tinge of sadness—his grey hair is thrown back over his head & exposes a forehead of benevolent form.]<sup>11</sup>

11 The passage in brackets is written at the top of a left-hand page facing the material that immediately precedes it in the printed text.

Cincinnati: May 12 th The steamer Messenger on 38 which I came down the Ohio I felt with some regret. That attachment which is formed to those with whom we have shared common dangers or pleasure is felt on leaving [those] with whom we have passed several days, having become domesticated to a certain extent aboard our steamer. Could one travel on our Western water with an assurances of safety I know of no more agreeable mode of passing a summer's week. The boat is a moving theatre of [ or ] museum of human Character, here are congregated together natives of every land--American German, Irish, Scotch, Spanish, English and french, Negro & White. The travelling merchants' agent, the farmer, the emigrant the tourist, the invalid, the "blackleg" the military man, the preacher & the artist, while attached to the boat itself are the captain & his boatmen a peculiar race, the negro firemen who entertained us as they passed their town where most of them resided when "home" by shouting at the top of their voices the chorus to one of their glees a huge negro giving the words with stentorian expression--all

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these again modified by individual character and circumstances, form studies of endless novelty & amusement to an observer. Much information is also acquired by the intercourse with fellow passengers, as there are scarc[e]ly any who many not have seen or known something peculiar to themselves. Seated on the “guards” with my companions a stiff breeze rendering the atmosphere of a delightful temperature 39 & unoccupied but by the pleasures of the passing moment, no lack of amusement & instruction was to be found—as a succession of beautiful views was presented to us, the wild & uncleared hills, the towns just emerging into existence—then a gradual transition to a more cultivated country where man & nature strove to vary the surface of the earth with every variety of foliage.

Occasionally a steamer passes & is hailed with a rude shout by the rough denizens of the “deck”—which is returned with one equally uncouth from the rival boat. A shout from a flat boat or raft is usually treated with dignified silence. With the exception of an occasional canoe or dug-out crossing the river, the steamer[,] the raft & the flat boat are the only craft seen upon the Ohio's surface. No sail is ever seen, the current being too strong & the course of the stream too tortuous for such mode of propulsion.

The scenery of the Ohio is peculiarly beautiful, it's upper portion passing thro' a richly wooded mountain country the sides of the mountain being seperated in most instances by a narrow skirt of meadow land or “*bottom*”, these green hills reflected in the waters of the river either by moonlight or day—and sinking away into the faintest blue of the distance, the clear sky above the glassy waters beneath, a pleasant breeze, good company animated by mutual courtesy, and prospect of a happy termination to our journey 40 beget contentment, & its soothing influence acts upon us irresistib[ly] the joke is passed, information is communicated, friends made, & the sordid cares of commerce & strife of existence forgotten in the contemplation of the beautiful, the true, the natural. On the deck below the same spirit prevails tho' in a ruder development, the boatmen & stokers shout their songs, the fiddle scrapes a merry jig, a “hodown” follows & tho' without a cent in their pocket, “O'er all the ills of life victorious” they thus occasionally vary their labours by giving rein to their animal spirits, no doubt are happier than many who with thousands

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are strangers to care-less enjoyment. My sketch book greatly amuses my deck friends for there I find ready use for my pencil, poverty and hard labour are strangers to the formality of fashion--the passions show their marks upon the face untrammelled by a hypocritical smirk of exclusiveness & pride. The temptation to endeavor to draw these beautiful shores is irresistible & I have already fill'd half my sketch book with unsuccessful attempts to *hint* their beauty.

41

### II Art in the Queen city of the West

May 13<sup>th</sup> Cincinnati. [Thomas] Cole's "voyage of life" at M r [George K.] Schoenberger's.<sup>1</sup> Rid of the allegory they might be good landscapes tho' far inferior to many of Coles works.<sup>2</sup> Allegories of this description except in the hands of men of the very greatest genius are seldom successful. The boy & boat &c become mere accessories to the landscape & dwindle into theatrical tinsel. Again, the landscape is destroyed by a strained effect & composition. The "*Elijah*" in the 1 Schoenberger assembled a large collection of art objects at Cincinnati, and a picture gallery was a feature of a magnificent home that he built in a suburb in 1864. He was a director of the Western Art Union of Cincinnati in 1847-48. *Biographical Cyclopædia and Portrait Gallery of Ohio*, 6:1457 (Cincinnati, 1895); D. J. Kenny, *New Illustrated Cincinnati*, 221-224 (Cincinnati, 1895); *A Sketch of the Women's Art Museum Association of Cincinnati*, 8 (Cincinnati, 1886). 2 Thomas Cole was among the earliest American landscape painters to use the native scene as his subject. His "Voyage of Life" is a series of allegorical paintings from which engravings were made. The latter were widely distributed and they were very popular. It is interesting to note that this series of engravings was exhibited at Le Due's book store in St. Paul in June, 1851. *Pioneer*, June 26, 1851. 42 same room is far superior—(why are these allegories failures?).

At M r [Nicholas] Longworth's is the bust of "Genevra" by [Hiram] Powers executed solely by his own hand & presented to his patron as a token of gratitude.<sup>3</sup> How greater than

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princes is he who can make such returns to his friends! It represents the head of a maiden in full bloom of youth—the features have acquired sufficient sharpness to convey the womanly character without losing the beautiful fullness of the young virgin. The face is full of expression of the tenderest feelings—the features classical without the coldness of some Greek sculpture. The “texture” is admirable the effect of flesh perfectly conveyed & the hair & drapery equally careful & truthful, nothing slurred or sketched. How different the style of art of the picture by [Benjamin?] West in the adjoining room representing Laertes & Ophelia. Powers' 3 Longworth settled in Cincinnati, where he studied and practiced law, experimented with grape culture, became a successful wine manufacturer, and made a fortune in real estate. He supplied funds that made it possible for Hiram Powers, a talented local sculptor, to go abroad to live. Powers executed his “Ginevra” in 1840; the “Greek Slave,” of which he made six duplicates in marble, was modelled in 1843. One of the latter statues was in the rooms of the Western Art Union at Cincinnati. See *Appletons' Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 4:17, 5:97 (New York, 1888); John P. Foote, *The Schools of Cincinnati and Its Vicinity*, 204 (Cincinnati, 1855). See also Mayer's Journal, p. 156, for the artist's opinion that “The reputation which Powers acquired in Europe awoke the Cincinnatians to the appreciation of Native talent and they have manfully stood by their Artists ever since.” 43 Greek slave is here at the Art Union rooms. The first impression to me was disappointment and certainly the *forms* of many parts of the figure are objectionable, being rather those of the woman accustomed to wear our modern clothes & to pursue the present habits of life than the female form in its purity. These changes may have been necessary in order to destroy all ideas of sensuality but it may be carried too far & the *plumpness* of form give way to *scrawniness*. The back of the figure I think much superior to the front & all the views in that position are very fine. The expression and “feeling” of the whole figure with the exceptions I have noticed is remarkably delicate & refined. The bust of Judge [Jacob] Burnet is at the house of that gentleman where I saw the original & the bust. It is a remarkably fine head full of dignity and truthfulness. The utmost detail is developed without destroying the masses or expression. Every form is beautifully made out & the effect of flesh and hair is admirable.



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It seems humanity turned to stone—and possesses none of the hardness usually seen in marble works. This is particularly remarkable in the modelling of the *mouths* of Power's statues which resemble more a cast from the life than a stone.

The Art Union Room & the *Artists'* Union rooms contain many creditable specimens of native as well a[s] foreign talent. The artists of Cincinnati, & this city has been peculiarly prolific in men of this class 44 are mostly the uneducated votaries of Art i.e so far as Academic instruction is concerned. The tendency of the school is good, self reliance & constant reference to nature, regardless, perhaps too much, of the great canons of art.<sup>4</sup> The painters are mostly landscape Artists and the beautiful country by which they are surrounded supplies them with ample material for study & subject. The most eminent in landscape is [William L.] Sonntag a native of Cincinnati & a social agreeable & modest gentleman. <sup>5</sup> He has travelled over the greater part of this country visiting all our finest scenery & has studied entirely in the school of nature. His landscapes are remarkably fine, distinct, characteristic & truthful. [Thomas W.] Whitridge, [Robert S.] Duncanson (a negro), also paint good landscape <sup>6</sup> the general defect of the artists here being a want of massiveness in the foregrounds & a hardness & harshness of drawing & colour. <sup>4</sup> An account of the development of the "Fine Arts" in Cincinnati appears in Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851*, 119-123 (Cincinnati, 1851). The writer includes a long list of local artist, in which many of the artists mentioned by Mayer are noted. Cist describes the "Arts Union Hall" as a "fine saloon," which "occupies the fourth story of the building at the corner of Sycamore and Fourth Streets; to which it has given its own name." The hall seems to have been used chiefly for temporary exhibits. See also Foote, *Schools of Cincinnati*, 207-209. <sup>5</sup> Sonntag was born near Pittsburg in 1822, but he passed his youth in Cincinnati. An account of his career appears in *Appleton's Cylopædia*, 5:606. Mayer mentions him also, *past*, p. 203. <sup>6</sup> A sketch of Duncanson appears in Wendell P. Dabney, *Cincinnati's Colored Citizens*, 89-93 (Cincinnati, 1926) <sup>45</sup> [Joseph O.] Eaton paints a good head, and bids fair to excell. There are others here of lesser degrees of talent, but these stand highest. Sculpture is peculiarly cherished in Cincinnati the nurse



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of Power, & [Shobald V.] Clevenger, who is inferior to him as far as I have seen. At the Art Union room I saw a fine landscape by [John F.] Kensett of N York & a good hunting scene by [William S.] Ranney of N Y. There is also an exquisite head by professor Shroeder of Dusseldorf which is a model for our artists as regards effect, drawing, & all the technical parts of the art. It is a female head & bust, & hand, very beautiful—highly finished yet broad & transparent.

Cincinnati is one of the most beautiful and attractive cities I have yet seen, situated on a generally rising plain & surrounded on three sides by hills, the fourth bounded by the river which here takes a semicircular curve. The hill to the east commands a fine view of the town & surrounding country & is the site of the Observatory where an astronomer is stationed to make observations &c.<sup>7</sup> The city is regularly laid out and its architectural adornments are in excellent taste. The materials used being mostly a species of free stone of a light drab colour. They do not possess the white marble or beautiful bricks of Baltimore but their buildings evince private taste & a pervading 7 For an account of the Cincinnati Observatory, see Cist, *Cincinnati in 1851*, 3410346. The corner stone of the observatory was laid in 1843 by John Quincy Adams. 46 public spirit. The Burnet house is a *magnificent* hotel of Palladian architecture—adorned with the finest mirrors, gilding, marble pavements & finest furniture.<sup>8</sup> Tho the accommodations are excellent I should have preferred for comfort the less ostentatious “Inn.” Prosperity and progress are every where evident & the long line of steam boat & piles of merchandise on the levee, the bustle of passing crowds, the whizz & whirr of factories & the elegant stores, bank building & public halls give token of a brilliant future to the Queen city of the West.

<sup>8</sup> A picture of the Burnet House forms the frontispiece of Cist, *Cincinnati in 1851*.

[Cincinnati besides the extensive business connections with the surrounding country is one of the greatest pork markets in the world. There are numerous factories & Steam Engines constantly at work. The cultivation of the vine is carried on successfully on the shores of the Ohio above & below Cincinnati, especially at Vevay.]<sup>9</sup>

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9 The paragraph inclosed in bracket is written at the top of a left-hand page facing Mayer's final comments about his visit to Cincinnati.

To W m F. Coale & Mr [John L] Ste[ttinius], grandson of M r Longworth I am indebted for kindnesses.<sup>10</sup> Altho' not very intimate with Mr & Miss Dale of Baltimore I met them with great pleasure accidentally at the hotel. In the midst of strangers & <sup>10</sup> John Longworth Stettinius was the son of Nicholas Longworth's daughter Mary and John Stettinius. C. F. Gross, *Cincinnati, The Queen City*, 4:612-615 (Cincinnati, 1912).

Dragoons, Fort Snelling

Dragoon Equipment, Fort Snelling

49 a strange city one grasps the hand of a fellow citizen with peculiar tenacity.

May 14. Left Cincinnati on the Ben Franklin, a "crack boat,"—& arrived in Louisville by 10½ but remained on board until the morning.<sup>11</sup> Old gentleman of a stage-coach notoriety turned up again, the old man is evidently filled with the milk of human kindness, a diet which has possibly impaired the sterner qualities of his mind—for he firmly believes the young ladies to be very respectable women. He still had the sense to discontinue the acquaintance on board the steamer. He has wealth & uses it well. Plenty of time & money he desires to take a tour to the west, but as his wife dreaded the dangers of Western waters he has taken the clergyman with him & pays all his expenses. He kindly assisted a poor man on the boat & gave him his own great-coat "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." A weakness of intellect is amply compensated by his kindness of heart. He has taken a fancy to me & introduced me to M r W. Cave Johnson, formerly a distinguished politician & Postmaster general under Polk's administration<sup>12</sup> He is a tall venerable looking man with flaxen hair & <sup>11</sup> The "Benj. Franklin" was built at Cincinnati in 1848. James T. Lloyd, *Lloyd's Steamboat Directory, and Disasters on the Western Waters*, 269 (Cincinnati 1856). <sup>12</sup> For an account of Johnson's career, see Joshua W. Caldwell, *Sketches of the Bench and Bar of Tennessee*, 187-190 (Knoxville,

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1898). 50 thin visage marked by line of anxiety & care, tho' his eye gives evidence of the undying flame of talent.

Conversed with an Irishman, walked the deck by one of the loveliest moons I ever beheld with an Englishman who has been making a tour from Canada thro' the country a man of some information & *neat* but a little ah-a-a ingleesh & concieted—tho' rather more liberal to this country than I had anticipated. As I retired a “Cannie Scot” demanded a share of my stateroom which I could not refuse, & found him honest.

The scenery for some miles below Cincinnati is of a gently undulating character the hills on either side being less bold than above, but as we got below Vevay the river widens & the hills acquire a more massive & extended form, richly wooded to the waters edge with a thick umbrageou[s] & uniform vegetation. The atmosphere was perfectly clear & the glassy surface of the water reflected with perfect distinctness the forms of the embracing mountains, the setting sun throw[ing] the whole scene into deep transparent masses of mellow light & shade. The day retired & the rival moon rose to contest the palm for beauteous limning of the landscape grand & to which the prize is due I know not so beautiful were both yet each so different. The moon rose full & the transparent atmosphere & unrippled river furnished a suitable theatre for the exhibition of her silvery magic. Here & there a light in some Cabin ashore, or the fire on 51 a raft or flat boat was reflected in the water, giving variety to the scene, or the ponderous mass of a steamboat come slowly onward th[r]o' the uncertain light, enveloped in portending cloud of smoke & steam, emblem of power, moving majestically thro the quiet water, regardless of current, wind or weather. The occasional shout or son of the boatmen were the only evidences of any animated presence than our own—the vast forest spreading over hill & vall[e]y to water edge & mountain top, & not a habitation seen of man of homan kind. The deep shadows & distinctness of the scene seemed to taunt the human with his own shallowness & to tempt him to & lose him in the depth of thought begot of peering into caverns of unfathomable shade—the light like liquid silver was evanescent, flitting on the surface of the water &

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the moon alone above seemed steady in its gaze as it looked with seeming smile on the maze, in which its beauty had beguiled our flippant fancy's.

As we passed down the river we beheld the quiet resting place of the truly good President Harrison. North Bend at the mouth of the Miami River is the seat of his family & his remains rest on a knoll which [is] visible many miles up & down the river an object of solemn suggestion.

52

### III The Mammoth Cave of Kentucky

Louisville May 15 th 1851. In company with Mr Hall of Washington & the Hon. W. Cave Johnston [ sic ] of Tennessee put up at the Galt house where I met Col I [Joseph P.] Taylor of Baltimore the late President's brother. The comparison between Louisville & Cincinnati is by no means flattering to the slave city. One notices the absence of that activity & neatness which distinguishes the former. That look of thrift & healthy progress is replaced by a sluggishness of public enterprise & a subjection of the senses, inseparable, I fear from slave labour. Here I first perceived myself in a more southern land than my native state. The physiognomy & costume assumes a more generous & liberal aspect. The sharp features & energetic eye & motion of the northerner & bluntness and his business-like manner are exchanged with lighter clothing for the easy contentment of manner & expression & more open social feeling of the southerner. One still bears the marks of his puritan origin while the cavalier still glimmers thro' the southern planter's exterior. This ease of manner & hospitality thro' [ though ] traits greatly to be admired and imitated do not compensate for the want of public energy & enterprise which is so nobly exhibited in the sister city of Cincinnati.

On the morning of the 16 th Left Louisville in the stage for the Mammoth cave—a distance to Bell's where we stopped that night of 95 miles.<sup>1</sup> The road at first lies thro' the most beautiful natural parks the trees in which are beech maple, & Tulip poplar chiefly, of great

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size and covered with the thickest & most luxuriant foliage, possessing a richness of form of colour which speaks a most fertile soil & healthy growth. The underbrush seems to have been entirely displaced by the fathers of the forest & the green sward seems as tho' tended by a careful gardener. The surface for some miles is level much of the road following the course of the Ohio river & as it meanders along its banks affording beautiful views of that majestic stream. At salt river a stream somewhat noted in our political annals as giving origin to the term "rowed up salt river,"<sup>2</sup> we took the ferry & crossing 1 It was customary for tourists who planned to visit the Mammoth Cave to spend a night at a tavern kept by Robert S. Bell, who was famous for his hospitality, his excellent table, and a drink known as "peach and honey." Horace Martin, *Pictorial Guide to the Mammoth Cave, Kentucky*, 16 (New York, 1851); Franklin Gorin, *Times of Long Ago (Barren County, Kentucky)*, 63 (Louisville, 1929); Kentucky taxlists, cited in a letter of Nina M. Visscher of the Kentucky State Historical Society, May 26, 1931. 2 Salt River, according to Webster, is "an imaginary river up which defeated political parties or candidates are supposed to be sent to oblivion." 54 passed thro' a gorge of the mountains highly picturesque Rocky & well wooded, with a bea[u]tiful spring on the road side which drops from ledge to ledge of the rocks in a silvery cascade. After this & until reaching Bell's our destination by stage route the country is sterile & uninteresting, probably the least fertile portion of Kentucky.

The pleasures of the morning ride were much heightened by intercourse with the driver a good specimen of a race rapidly diminishing, the *American* stage driver, a person entirely distinct from the English individual of that title. In the presence [ *present* ] instance he was tall & well proportioned, a large frame muscular & enured to hardship, with little of the encumbrance to agility called *fat*, his feautres are decidedly acquiline the mouth compressed with determination & the eye bright. Complexion sun-burnt, the slouched felt scarely screening his face from the sun's scorching rays. In fact he would be an admirable model for the pioneer of our backwoods representing a physiognomy peculiarly *American*. Affable & polite there was nothing servile in his manner but you felt that he was to be treated with proper respect, & that he considered himself politically at least your equal.

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None of that cruelty to his horses was exhibited which too often disgusts us in others of his class. My fellow travellers were a young Kentuckian named Richison & an old negro who was going home at his ease, stopping to visit his friends 55 at the roadside plantations. He was a member of one of those patriarchal establishments only found in our southern country. I understood from the driver that he was the old *friend* & constant adviser of his master who consulted him on all occasions with regard to the disposition of *their* affairs. He was looked up to with evident veneration by all the younger darkies he met & to whom he never fail'd to address some gossip for he seemed universal[ly] known & regarded.

Arrived at Bell's an eccentric old landlord who treated us in a generous manner tho' his announcements were given rather a voice of command than invitation. He is a veteran of 74 & has never been a day absent from his present residence for years. He is a man of good sense, some humour & a disposition to accumulate, the first of which qualities united to his venerable years have rendered "old man Bell" an oracle. With a gruff kind of *command* he invited [me] to take some of his peach-brandy for which he is famous & I bear witness to the excellence of the preparation as well as to the admirable supper which followed, for this is a land literally flowing in milk & honey, venison of tenderest quality & other delicacies of the wilderness graced the board to which we were *ordered* in the same style as to the brandy. After supper the boy was called to take my trunk & a candle a hint which I understood t me[an] "go to bed,[""] & acted therein.

56

In the morning a negro drove me to the Mamoth cave hotel & soon after being provided with a guide I proceeded to visit that great natural curiosity.<sup>3</sup> Proceeding a few hundred yards down a richly wooded ravine you arrive at a large cavity in the hill side from which so cold a draught of air issues that the change startled you by it[s] suddenness & seeking the cause you perceive that the yawning mouth of the cavern is before you. descending several steps & following rapidly the footsteps of the guide you are past the current of air & find yourself in perfect stillness within the cave. For some distance the harmony of the scene is destroyed by the present [ *presence* ] of the remains of salt-petre works formerly

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used during the war of 1812, great quantities of this article being extracted from the dirt of the cave.<sup>4</sup>

3 Bell's tavern was located nine miles from the cave. See Martin, *Mammoth Cave*, 17. A picture of the hotel at the cave forms the frontispiece of this volume. 4 The remains were still to be seen in the cave in 1901. Early in the nineteenth century it was found that the cave abounded in "nitrous earth," and from this was extracted saltpeter. The cave was privately owned at the time, and during the War of 1812 its owners "made a fortune" from it. An account of the method of mining the saltpeter and an estimate of its importance to the United States during the war appear in Horace C. Hovey and Richard E. Call, *Mammoth Cave of Kentucky: An Illustrated Manual*, 11 (Louisville, 1901). See also Martin, *Mammoth Cave*. 20.

Beyond this the subterranean scenery begins & it is probably unequally [ *unequaled* ] by any other example known. An immense cavern fifty to sixty feet in

### *A Red River Cart*

#### *Winter Dress of a Red River Half-breed*

59 width & often more in height extends for four miles from the entrance, & constitutes the main cave. Here perfect stillness reigns & awful silence, never broken but by the hasty flight of some solitary bat & that only near the entrance. Impenetrable darkness fills every cavity & our lamps rather hint that [ *than* ] fully reveal the immense masses of jagged, & riven rocks strewn upon the bed of the cave apparently tossed & torn by some tumultuous torrent. Rising from this confusion wild the ledges of rocks tower above one another in grand masses to the ceiling or roof which is nearly flat & appears as tho' laid over this chasm chaotic by some cunning architect—beyond is impenetrable darkness and all around are scattered the enormous fragments casting shadows of alarming form & magnitude It seems a fit residence for gigantic spirits & but little imagination is required to believe their presence, for the form of an immense rock has given it the name of the giant's coffin.



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Passing two houses of stone which had been erected for the residence of consumptive invalids who for the sake of a restoration to health were willing to become denizens of this dismal abode for some months, the atmosphere having at one period been supposed beneficial to patients of that class,<sup>5</sup> you arrive at the “Star chamber” a portion of the main cave which has been thus named from the circumstance of certain <sup>5</sup> Some remarks on the supposedly pure and healthful atmosphere of the cave are quoted by Martin, *Mammoth Cave*, 39-41. 60 crystals or white substances reflected from the midst of the dark mass of the roof giving the idea of a starry sky, the deception is remarkable. Beyond the cave increases in rugged & appalling grandness passing th[r]o' many scenes of great picturesqueness. One of these is the cascade hall where a stream drops from the ceiling a hundred feet to the floor beneath, & the grand temple an immense rotunda near the termination of this portion of the cave. Numerous avenues branch from this one to great distances the greatest distance from the entrance to the extreme end being about 9 miles. These are of lesser size than the first & seem to bear greater evidence of the action of water than other portions. Numerous pits, domes & stalactite & stalagmite formations are found & the general direction is a descent until you reach the “river,” a stream some thirty feet wide & often as deep running as the poet says “thro' caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea”. This region partakes more of the horrible, dismal & dreary & suggest the memory of the unhallow[e]d journey of Dante & Virgil, it is a fit place for the wandering & wearied damned & realizes our ideas of Pluto's realms.

One branch of the river is aptly named the Styx, the other Echo river. On this you embark, the guide acting as oarman Seldom do you encounter such a situation. In a small flat-boat steered by a guide who by the dim light might easily be imagined <sup>61</sup> an uneasy spirit of the place, the still quiet stream cloudily revealing the sharp angles & points of treacherous rocks lurking just beneath the surface, the low arched roof with the sides rising perpendicularly from the river robbing the drowning wretch of even the sight of a shore on which a hand-hold could be found— & the wild song of the guide dying away in echo[e]s which give the effect of an organ accompaniment of some unseen hand— &



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you have a scene where you feel yourself doubtful of your waking existence. At one point of the pass[a]ge and for a space of thirty yards I was obliged to compress myself to the smallest compass in order to pass under the superincumbent rock. Had the river risen, as it has been known to do, before our return or situation would have been truly awful for our chances of escape would have [been] resting on finding a passage thro' Purgatory[,] a dangerous & intricate ravine where the water does not rise as rapidly as in the river.

On landing you find yourself in the “Infernal” regions & they are well named for a place of greater dreariness & utter absence of all that can serve to occupy the mind or offer repose to the body I cannot imagine. An irregularly arched way with an uneven & tortuous bed, composed of rock seemingly formed of mud of the most fetid colour, not offering even the gratification of an angle to the eye for all the forms are rounded into one another in ungraceful 62 curves the floor being of so *uneasy* a surface as to suggest no idea of repose but rather to cause that species of progression seen in landsman on a pitching ship, then all is damp, dreary, desolate, & the mind is irresistably turned upon itself—a fitting spot for the torments of conscience to be administered. Two other places are suited to Dante's ideas of punishment—here is the “Winding way” “or fat-man's-misery” a path which was once the bed of a torrent of about a foot in width & waist deep, here the gluttons might be compelled to walk for ever & until reduced in flesh. After this is the “valley of humility” where the proud must stop double. From the infernal regions you walk three miles thro' an arched & tortuous rocky avenue over pointed & brocken rock to the “snow ball room” where the crystalization of gypsum on the ceiling give it the effect of an incrustation of snowballs. Gypsum formations are only found beyond the river the first portion of the cave being of darker limestone.

No living creatures are found within this subterranean world except a few bats who seek shelter in the mouth of the cave during winter, & species of rats who frequent the main cave & who as well as the fish found in the river are of a lighter colour than their brothers of the daylight world. The fish found in the river are small, colourless & without eyes.<sup>6 6</sup>

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For a discussion of the flora and fauna of the cave, see Hovey and Call, *Mammoth Cave*, 100-107. 63 There are a few spiders & crawfish of a like unhealthy hue.

I returned from my tour of the cave, having been absent 8 hours & having walked about 18 miles, the effect of so much exercise being much less fatiguing than then same amount above ground, owing probably to the equable & agreeable temperature all parts of the cave at all seasons being about 60° of Fahrenheit.

Another cave in the vicinity, ("Whites cave") contains more of the stalactite & stalagmite formulation—which in its forms suggests many useful ideas of forms & ornaments to the architect. The stone is not brilliant except when broken when the crystalization is apparent. The whole of this region is limestone & contains many similar caves of smaller size. The only remains found in the Mammoth Cave were the bones of some gigantic human being & some of the bones of a mammoth & a wooden bowl found by an early explorer near a spring supposed to be of Indian manufacture. The mummies *said* to have been found have were discovered in a cave some three or four miles distant (Long's).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> According to Hovey and Call the story that mummies were found in Mammoth Cave had its origin in the fact that a mummy found in a neighboring cave was exhibited in Mammoth Cave. *Mammoth Cave*, 28. 64

### IV By Stage and Boat to St. Louis

May 19. Left the cave for Bell's & at 12 oclock found myself in the stage for Nashville in company with an old gentleman, of evident gastronomic taste. The country, which I first saw the next morning, resembles a prairie tho' of less extent & varied with clumps of trees & well cultivated farms. The road is a fine one & we travelled rapidly notwithstanding the rain which fell in torrents until noon. Until arriving within about twenty five miles of Nashville the scenery is uninteresting. At this point we descend from a ridge of hills and enter a most beautifully undulating country covered with farms & plantations in the highest state of cultivation the neat airy white & stone coloured dwelling embedded in the beautiful natural parks which I had seen first in Kentucky but which here exist, if

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anything, in greater luxuriance. The houses partake of the cottage style two stories high covering a large space & surrounded by porches which protect them from the sultry heat of summer. Every thing here wears a more southern aspect, the sultry heat, 65 the Luxuriant & various foliage, the sprouting cotton plants, the cool costumes & the negro[e]s all bespeak an approach to the tropics. The trees mostly found here are the beech, sugar maple sycamore, buckeye, walnut, tulip poplar, Elm, & the usual varieties of oak, these are often covered with the most graceful festoons of grape vines & other running plants & the May apple grows in large patches beneath their shade, in the midst of blue grass & other grasses of nutritious character. Looking into the cool shade beneath these groves the light is seen in the distance falling here & there on the emerald carpet & presenting an enticing variety of effect. My companions during the day were increased by the addition of a "Kaintuck hauss trader" a giant of gaunt & bony frame with cunning eyes & rich firm mouth, & a farmer of thin nervous aspect who advocated slave labour & "wasn't to be put down, no whar!" Ar, bar whar, har thar &c. are the pronunciation of air, bear, hair, &c—& the observation "War gwine quite peert[,] fast, lively[,] has been addressed to me more than once.

*Nashville* is beautifully situated in the midst of a fertile country & on the banks of the Cumberland river. It stands on a rock of limestone the soil being about 3 to 5 feet deep. It is regularly built & most of the houses have gardens attached. Many of the private residences of handsome specimens of domestic architectures & the public are many of them elegant 66 the new state house now building after the design of W. Strickland being a tasteful & correct piece of architecture of white limestone & when completed will cost near a million of dollars.

At Mr. F's I spent the evening enjoying the domestic comedy in which *Mrs. F* & her daughter enacted the principal characters. *Mrs. F* is a lady of sixty who apparently desires to make herself *excessively* agreeable & supposes herself to posses "great conversational powers" & to be highly "intellectual & perfectly au fait in all the maneuvers & [black in MS.] of fashionable life having been frequently to Washington & looking forward to seeing

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her husband a political “Magnifico”. She wears a turban & displays a great extent of forehead, or rather “frontal integument” from either side of which depends two rusty coloured curls of some length, a scarf thrown over a rather low silk dress which hangs on a thin & “jerky” figure of commanding height with a large fan twirled by three fingers & a pair of net-mits complete the external. On entering, the lady makes an antediluvian courtesy & throws herself into a chair in a neglige[nt] tho' studied attitude, one foot being thrust slightly forward, the other withdrawn and the arms “contracted”, having “posed” a benignant smile graces the lower portion of her face & an intellectual spark is forced from her eyes. Her conversation is prodigiously animated a running fire of sentiment, the last review & Bolmar's French phrases, 67 her temperament she expects you to find poetic, but is evidently the study of elegant extracts, U. S. speaker, & the most approved topics of fashionable life. Expression is applied by means of peculiar motion of the foot & fan & the cheeks are thrown “in & out of gear” with wonde[r]ful facility, the same worn-smile being reproduced thereby. She absorbs the conversation, indeed “she considers it her duty” to entertain the company, poor Mr. F says nothing but sits as an “accessory” in the background & plays with the children. Miss F the young lady of—years is an evident pupil of her Ma to whom she looks with admiration & sympathises by look & foot motion, their fans match & they use them accordingly. I bid farewell, giving Mother & daughter “searoom” for their genuflexious which corresponded precisely & retired with Mr. F to the door who directed me to my hotel.

In riding to Nashville I saw a woman & child nearly exactly in the position of Raphaels “Madonna della sedulla”—sitting at a cottage door— also a rattle snake on the road side. The Cumberland river winds between high cliffs of limestone, crowned with Forests, which generally extend to the river's edge & are reflected with great distinctness in the clear water, especially at sunset hours. It is a beautiful stream tho' small & difficult to navigate on account of rocks & “snags”.

May 23rd Arrived at Peducah a small tho' thriving 68 town below the confluence of the Cumberland & Ohio rivers. The steamer from Louisville on which I wish to embark for St

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Louis did not arrive until dusk, & I thus lost sight of the scenery of the Ohio from Louisville to “the mouth” with the exception of the small distance from the mouth of the Cumberland Peducah. The Ohio is here very wide, generally not less than a mile, the banks much lower than above Louisville & thickly timbered. Altho' lacking the picturesque variety of its mountain course above Cincinnati, it is yet here a magnificent stream, elegant & feminine—broad deep, & clear bounded by a country rich in useful products.

An old gentleman named “Bell” of Tennessee was my companion on board the Lady Franklin & was a very clever, sturdy Western & southern specimen.<sup>1</sup> I supposed him to be my only acquaintance aboard the “Lady Franklin” the Louisville steamer, but with my usual luck, I had not been long in the crowded Cabin before a gentleman next me, asked if I was not from Baltimore, he seemed to know me having seen me there & at Louisville, tho' he was unknown to me. I found him to be a Mr. Makorl a travelling agent of Duvall Keighler & Co of Baltimore on his way to the trading towns on the Missouri river & 1 The “Lady Franklin” was side-wheeler, built at Wheeling in 1850. In the summer of 1851 it was first used in the upper Mississippi River trade, and it was continued in this service until 1856, when it sank. George B. Merrick, *Old Times on the Upper Mississippi*, 278 (Cleveland, 1909). 69 he proved an agreeable & gentlemanly companion.<sup>2</sup> I soon made other acquaintances from whom I derive information & pleasure & I[n] travelling this is as essential to one's profit as the observation of the country.

<sup>2</sup> The firm of Duvall, Keighler, and Dorsey, “agents domestic cotton and wholesale goods,” is listed in the Baltimore directory for 1851.

This boat presented more the picture which I had imagined of a Western steamboat than any I had seen, the great number of passengers & the mixture of character to be seen all peculiar to this region & nation. There is nothing which has attracted my attention so much as the fine physical development of these men of the West, the majority six-feet in height & often over, but generally well proportioned[ed], robust, stalwart, & hardy. It is probable that nowhere could so fine a body of energetic active men, be found prepared to face any danger & accomplish any work of enterprise. Altho' giving the palm to the male

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sex in the West for physical development, I must still claim for the fair & graceful daughters of Maryland & Virginia the superiority in feminine attractions to their Western sisters.

One of the causes of disease & most trying vicissitudes to health in this region are the rapid changes of temperature. A day ago I was sweltering in the heat of the south & now it is cold enough for all the winter clothes I can muster. The “father of waters” 70 hails me with an attendant Eolus. On awaking this morning I found myself upon his bosom ploughing our way in defiance of a chilly [“]north-wester”. I was made certain of my locality by an old & bony character declaring “we had gone right peert in the night & were a goin up the Massesseppi”. The river here & until you reach it's confluen[ce] with the Missouri, which many consider the parent stream, is wide turbid, & filled with uncertain currents, sweeping down ward with gigantic power sweeping all obstructions from its course, & cutting away the banks on either side while it adds to them upon the other, raising treacherous sandbars in a day & destroying an island which it reforms fifty miles below. The banks are low of dark earth originally the sediment of the river, & are being continually removed or replaced by the changing course of the stream, the land on either side is flat extended some distance back to low ranges of hills called “bluffs”—and covered with a thick growth of wood. It has not the *beauty* of the Ohio, but possesses a heedless grandeur & power unknown to the former, the signification of whose name is “the beautiful river”.

At 4 o'clock on the morning of the 23 rd of May we arrived in St Louis & I took lodgings by the advice of M r Bell at the “American” which I found an excellent house, affording more comfort than the more expensive hotels of fashionable celebrity. S t Louis is a city of rapidly increasing importance, it is

Trader's Cabin, Traverse des Sioux

A Room in the Trader's Cabin, Traverse des Sioux

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73 strictly a commercial city commanding the great produce trade of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin & Missouri. It receive[s] produce from these states & ships it to N. Orleans. It also supplies the Missouri & the neighboring states with goods of all sorts—and it is on the road to the improving regions of the “farwest”. All these advantages combine to make it a place of great trade. The effect of its peculiar condition is eviden[t] in the appearance of the city and its inhabitants who all wear the anxious & care worn looks of “men of business” not unmixed, I regret to say, with that reckless, & irreligious spirit which seems induced by the easy acquirement of the means of support & the selfish, heedless pursuit of wealth.

The city has the appearance of a place in the progress of erection, nothing appears complete, or settled by age, the streets partly paved, houses being built, sewers dug & crowds of busy anxious faces hurrying to & fro. So rapid & vast has been the increase of the population [of] this city, that time had not been sufficient to keep up with the demands for its extension.<sup>3</sup> The old or French portion of the town is closely built or rather rebuilt since the great fire of 1849, which destroyed almost the entire business portion of the town.<sup>4</sup> This extends along the river 3 Between 1840 and 1850 the population of St. Louis increased from 16,469 to 77,860. 4 For a vivid description of the fire of 1849, especially along the St. Louis water front, see Hiram M. Chittenden, *Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River*, 185-187 (New York, 1903). 74 which runs at the foot of a wide “levee” which affords landings for at least 100 steamboats nearly that number being always moored to the bank, taking in & discharging freight, letting off steam, & pushing out or arriving. This collection of steamers brings together an immense concourse of drays, carts, wagons & every variety of pedestrians & freight. There is probably no busier scene in America in the same space. For two miles a forest of smoke stacks is seen towering above the “arks” from which they seem to grow.<sup>5</sup> All between this and the line of warehouses is filled with a dense mass of apparently inextricable confusion & bustle, noise & animation. more steamboats are probably seen here than at any port in the world, they



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being, the only means of transportation to & from this place; but 'ere long the Railroads are destined to diminish their monopoly.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> A crude drawing of the St. Louis levee is in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40:26. <sup>6</sup> The rise and decline of the St. Louis steamboat traffic are the subject of a chapter in Walter B. Stevens, *St. Louis: The Fourth City, 1764-1911*, 1:255-280 (St. Louis, 1911). The city's first railroad began operations on December 1, 1852.

One might find material for study of the human mind within this space to occupy him for some time. The “decks” of the steamers alone are a world in themselves, the emigrants, the boatmen, & the variety of travelers of the labouring class which teem on these Western waters are there seen in every position & occupation. The upper & new portion of the 75 city is regularly laid out, with broad streets & the public buildings & private residences are many of them in very good taste.

\*(Of the Western states Illinois probably offers as great inducements to the agriculturists as any, as large a proportion of the land is arable & it affords crops of grain & corn of great yield. It's surface is gently undulated and is the first state where the prairies are found. Ohio produces grain, corn, and fruit & manufactures extensively, Indiana & Illinois grain & corn—Kentucky, ditto Tobacco & hemp, Tennessee grain & cotton & Tobacco. “Hog & hominy” abound in Ohio, Indiana & Illinois. Kentucky raises mules & Tennessee grows more corn than any of the states & raises large herds of cattle.)

Called in S t Louis on D r Hoffman & Mr Cassen, & was kindly treated by D r Saunders.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> William H. Suanders, M.D., and J.A. Kasson, attorney, are listed in the St. Louis directory for 1851. <sup>76</sup>

### **V On the Missouri Frontier**

May 25<sup>th</sup> Left S t Louis in the steamer Diana Vernon for Tully but on arriving at Hannibal discovered that the river had risen to an unprecedented height having overflowed its banks & spreading over the praries & bottom lands had in some places swelled to fifteen miles in width where it usually is but one. I was therefore obliged to land at “La-grange”[,] Tully



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& the adjoining towns of Alexandria & Canton being completely surrounded with water & the houses mostly rendered uninhabitable, all means of egress to the surrounding country except by means of “skiffs” being destroyed.<sup>1</sup> After passing the mouth of the Missouri the Mississippi becomes clearer, & the shores higher presenting a stream winding thro' well wooded bluffs & flats and 1 Tully was a Mississippi River port of some importance adjoining Canton on the north and located about nine miles north of Lagrange in Lewis County, Missouri. The “memorable high waters of 1851 almost totally destroyed” Tully, and it is now one of Missouri's “obsolete towns.” *History of Lewis, Clark, Knox and Scotland Counties, Missouri*, 224 (St. Louis, 1887); Samuel Cummings, *The Western Pilot*, 144 (Cincinnati, 1849). 77 studded with numerous islands—and its romantic character increases from this point to its rise in the lake.

At Tully & Kentuckian alias a Western-Yankee conveyed me thro' no very agreeable roads to Byrneham Wood the residence of my aunt Mrs. Flora Byrne.<sup>2</sup> There are few regions better adapted to farming & the enjoyments of “country life” than this portion of Missouri. A wide bottom or prairie studded here and there, tho' sparsely, with clumps of trees extends some miles back to a range of bluffs, or rather to a table land which continues with few interruptions to the rocky Mountains. The bluffs between the bottom & the upland prairies is well timbered & the underwood is as yet suffic[i]ently low to admit the passage in any direction with ease of a horseman. Beyond this the prairies begin increasing in flatness & extend until they reach the Rocky mountains. The timber is of large size & the foliage rich, black-walnut sycamore attaining a great size, cotton wood, maple (sugar) & the usual varieties of oak also abound. The prairies are as yet covered here & there only with clump & thickets which have grown up since the settlement of the country, the Indian custom of burning the prairies having formerly destroyed all the young trees.

<sup>2</sup> A pictorial record of Mayer's visit to Byrneham Wood is to be found in his Sketchbooks, 40:1-21, 39, 40.

I was much gratified to meet my aunt who I had not seen since she left Baltimore her former residence 78 & native city. Her farm is at the foot of the bluff & comma[nds] view

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of the praries which extends to the river six miles distant. This is now covered to within a mile of the house by the river & presents the apearance of a lake studded with Islands. This prarie is five miles wide & extends along the bank of the river for seven miles. A grove formed chiefly of that most graceful tree, the American Elm is not far from the house & the full extent of the prarie is seen here & there thro' the arborial arches.

This county (Clarke) was the favourite hunting ground of Black-hawk and his braves & the trees of the Elm-grove still retain in their bark the marks left by the various parties who had encamped beneath their shade but twenty five years ago.<sup>3</sup> Now the country is comparatively well settled chiefly by Kentuckians & Virginians. The former are a hardy pioneer race but lamentably deficient in education & the desire to procure it. Their ignorance gives rise to many amusing incidents—all of which furnish a field of observation to my aunt Flora. Their nearest neighbor is an old Kentuckian of the Name of Lucas who with his family reside in the former “Quarters.”<sup>4</sup> He is fine specimen of the backwoodsman

<sup>3</sup> Some information about the activities of Black Hawk in Clark County, which is in the extreme northeast corner of Missouri, and about the effect of the Black Hawk war of 1832 in that vicinity is to be found in the *History of Lewis, Clark, Knox and Scotland Counties*, 254-248. <sup>4</sup> Sketches of Lucas appear in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40:19, 21. <sup>79</sup> & realizes Cooper's idea of “Letherstocking” He is tall, over six feet, & square built & broad giving evidence of great strength & powers of endurance, his face is founded on a classic construction (tho' rather shorter in the nose than the standard) & tho' bearing the marks of fatigue, endurance, & exposure, an expression of great delicacy & even refinement is evident—great decision & perfect good humor in the mouth & the clear piercing eye of the hunter looks out from its corrugated cavern beneath his shaggy brows. He is erect as an arrow & his motions have yet the freedom of alertness of the wary woodsman, altho' his ringlets are greyed by sixty winters. Honesty & kindness, bravery and determination characterise him. His daughters are even less educated than himself, being ignorant of 80 even reading & writing yet of naturally intelligent & active minds, one of them possesses the most perfectly *Grecian* face I have ever seen, the construction &

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form of the head being exactly similar to some of the antique heads of the Muses, tho' lacking the intellectual expression requisite to those characters. These girls exhibit none of the bashfulness one might expect tho' modest in the demeanor, this is to be referred to the independent & republican ideas engendered from their infancy. They consider themselves "as good as anybody", to use their own expression. They consider that their ancestors got along very well without education & they think that they may do the same. It is a pity indeed that a people of so many natural good qualities should be so dead to their intellectual progress. They are Roman Catholics.

The day after my arrival Ed. Fu[r]ness & Kelly being obliged to go some miles into the back country, they invited me to accompany them, the probability of seeing a deer hunt being an inducement. As we cantered along thro' the wild woodlands, Kelly, that embodiment of Irish heart & humor, entertained us with the "window Malone" & other choice Irish lyrics which he sang with a clear voice & *native* expression.<sup>5</sup> The dogs accompanied us & we met with no other than false alarms produced by the scent of some innocent rabbit when we reached a Smithy where a <sup>5</sup> A portrait of Kelly appears in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40:3. 81 noted hunter proposed to add his hounds to the pack & having stationed my friends at points where the deer were likely to pass I accompanied in on a "drive" as it is termed. We had searched hill & dale for [a deer] & the horn had sounded often to withdraw the pack from "false scents" and our patience & hopes were nearly exhausted, when from a thicket near by a deer with tail & head erect leaped, in fear & uncertainty from its concealment, & instantly, ho! Juno! Tully! Boxer! & the hounds were in full cry we followed at full speed & I instantly lost all fear of ditches & dikes in the excitement of the chase. The sharp crack of a rifle told of the huntsman's alertness, but it failed to hit its mark & merely turned the course of the animals so that my friends lost their venison. We rode for sometime & followed the chorus of the hounds until we lost them in the distance, the deer having chosen an unusual course. A day after he was found, some ten miles distant where the dogs had killed it. The chase has its charms, but I dislike to see the poor creatures wantonly murdered.

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A large mocassin snake paid with his life the penalty of intruding himself on our presen[ce] as we were about to seat ourselves on his residence an old log. The rattlesnakes have nearly disappeared from this country, but the mocassin who are nearly as poisonous, & more dangerous as they give no warning, still remain. There are other snakes but the most singular 82 is the jointed snake which when struck seperated into options which seem to have been united by a kind of ball & socket joint. If the head which is attached to a portion is not killed it will return & unite the other portions to itself. They are generally about an inch in diameter & two to three feet long, & but rarely found. These facts I have from undoubted authority.<sup>6</sup>

6 It is likely that the snake that Mayer saw was an ordinary water snake, a species that is frequently found in logs in Missouri. That region is the northern limit of the range of the water moccasin, which leaves the water but rarely and does not go into logs. Mayer seems to have accepted without question the story of the mythical jointed snake.

My stay in Missouri was rendered peculiarly agreeable by the kind attentions of my aunt & with her society & the many “studies” for my pencil which present themselves on all sides I could have passed a summer with ease, at Byrneham Wood. The numerous amusing anecdotes of western life which my aunt has related to me with the peculiar zest which she possesses I shall long laugh over. An old woman who had heard of the piano, desired to hear it played upon & on beholding the operation, remarked “Wall now, I guess our July An[n] might larn to do that, fur she's mighty handy with the knittin needles”. On being told of paper hangings she remarked “I guess ye hangs em up in winter & takes em down in the summer”. A young man who “did” the faces of the citizens with red & white earths on levenpenny 83 calico seeing the portraits of my aunt & the Doctor, took one down & rapped it with all his might to discover the material & remarked that [he] thought calico “jest as good”, & when asked if he was going to Italy to study the old masters, he said, “ I dont no nothin bout the ole masters, *Smith's my boss*”. These are but specimens, their number is infinite. With all their ignorance, their hearts are most often in the right place and there are many who fill their sphere in the log cabin with greater honor & nobility than the titled

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denizen of a palace. I shall not soon forget “Old-man Lucas” and his interesting & beautiful daughters.

June the 3<sup>rd</sup> My aunt bid farewell to Byrnehamwood for some years that she may educate her daughter Annie, a sweet & charming girl of twelve, who has grown up, like the flowers of her native praries untainted by the pestilential air of city fashions & conventional life.<sup>7</sup> She is a child of nature & a “prarie bird” can managed a horse like a circus rider & find her way in any direction thro' the woods and praries Her mind is clear, & solid, free from the rubbish of crowded seminaries & her heart is alive to the least want of another—she'll make a woman, if she withstand these cities.

7 Some portraits of Annie Byrne are in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40:40.

Taking leave of Geo. Fletcher & Ned Furness who will find themselves lonely after this & bidding farewell 84 well to Mr. Lucas' family we travelled over desperate roads or rather over the untracked praries for the whole day in hopes of reaching “La Grange” the nearest landing for steamboats, at present accessible from the back-country—but as we were toiling over an uneven & rutted prarie we were hailed by the honest voice of Fletcher, who without further “todoo” pulled down the fence & insisted in the name of Mr. Eagan, on our stopping the night under his roof. We were received with Virginia hospitality & witnessed a *solemn* sunset over the prarie— its vast extent being in deep shadow while the horizon was relieved against a blood red sky. The monotony of our journey had been broken by the “miring” of our horses in the muddy bank of a stream misnamed “Sugar creek.” Oxen loaned by the neighboring farmers dragged the carriage out after an hour's delay & we proceeded on our way. At breakfast the conversation turned on the subject of carrying arms, & I received a wrinkle from “old-man Lucas” who said that “he'd never carried anything but a few percussion caps in his waiscoat pocket & they answered every purpose” for when he got in “saasy” company he “jest tuk one or two from his pocket & began to play with them” & he found that the *hinted presence* of a pistol soon lulled the storm of his opponent.

In due season we arrived in St Louis again the time having been pleasantly beguiled on the boat by listening 85 to the delightful songs of my aunt who accompanied herself on the guitar. My little cousin's wonder & delight on seeing the various novelties of the city was amusing indeed, for it was to her a new world who had never before (but for a day or so) seen any thing but the wild woods & praries & nothing in the shape of a town larger than the villages on the river.

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### VI Up the Mississippi to St. Paul

On the 8 th of June took passage & went abroad the Steamer "Excelsior" up for St Pauls & Fort-Snelling a distance of near eight hundred miles from St. Louis.<sup>1</sup> The boat was crowded with freight [*sic*] Emigrants & passengers. I found myself in a state-room with a Mr [Charles] Sexton, Editor of the St Croix Enquirer, Wisconsin, who proved a useful companion, & amusing "study".<sup>2</sup> Thin as an anatomy his smile was ghastly & like a 1 The "Excelsior," a side-wheeler of 172 tons, was built at Brownsville, Pennsylvania in 1849. It was used in the St. Louis and St. Paul trade in 1850, and in 1851 it was one of three boats to run on the Minnesota River. The treaty commissioners with their attendants and supplies were transported to Traverse des Sioux aboard the "Excelsior." See *post*, p. 145. It was owned and commanded by Captain James Ward. The distance by river between St. Louis, according to the government survey of 1890, is 741 miles. Merrick, *Old Times*, 267, 298; Thomas Hughes, "History of Steamboating on the Minnesota river," in *Minnesota Historical Collection*, 10:137, 158, 161. 2 Sexton's newspaper evidently had not been published during his absence from his Wisconsin home, for the *Pioneer* for July 24, 1851, includes the following comment: "St. Crorx Enquirer.— ... this interesting little sheet has been resuscitated, by C. Sexton, Esq., and comes to us considerably improved in appearance. Judging from its advertising columns, (and what surer way is there?) we should think that the business of Willowriver had trebled since last year." The editor seems to have been Charles Sexton, who is listed in the manuscript census records of the town

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of Buena Vista, St. Croix County, Wisconsin, for 1850 as a printer thirty-two years of age, whose birthplace is Vermont. The census schedules are in the possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Buena Vista, now known as Hudson, was platted in 1848 at the junction of the Willow and St. Croix rivers. 87 grinning skull a sort of "melancholy joy," & his complexion of so death-like a hue that I once was about to wake him to know if he was dead! an unavoidable bull, I confess. Yet this carcass of a man had been to the Rocky mountains & pierced the forests of Oregon until he had gazed on the Pacific & had returned again with two companions by a southern route through Utah & Nebraska to the states again. He was by birth a "Yankee" & formerly, I conjecture a printer, then a reporter, & now an Editor, a man of energy, thrift perseverance & intelligence & "good-hearted enough".

A number of Prussian emigrants of the better class, with their beards[,] good figures & foreign costumes, a party of Irishmen, said to be "noble", a certain officer of the army undoubtedly "royal" who amused us & astonished too by his wit & extensive information, merchants from St Louis & the east, ratfsmen from the head waters of the Mississippi, farmers from Iowa & Wisconsin & in fact representatives of almost every state in the Union, with Canada & Europe were found in the cabin.

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On Deck were Germans and Irish a filthy set, who[se] uncleanness no doubt hastened the deaths which occurred among them & I was heartily glad when we landed the last at Dubuque. The first intimation

### *Burial of the Cholera Dead*

I received of the presence of death in our midst was the tolling of the bell & the mooring of the boat at the foot of a high bluff on the Illinois shore, soon some hands jumped a shore[,] a grave was speedily dug & as the last rays of the setting sun glided from the waters face, a bird sent up a joyful note over the grave of the infant which an hour before had breathed its last. We proceeded on our way an[d] 'ere two days more had passed we had buried *five*



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deck passengers[,] I fear some of them victims of cholera no doubt aggravated or induced by filthiness, exposure, fatigue & improper diet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A pen and ink sketch of the "Burial of the Cholera dead" is in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40:30. Cholera was "very prevalent on the river" in 1850; there was a serious epidemic of the disease in Wisconsin in 1851 and 1852. Governor Alexander Ramsey, in his diary for June 11, 1851, notes that a steamboat arrived at St. Paul with "a few cases of cholera reported on board." The unpublished Ramsey Diaries are in the possession of the governor's daughter, Mrs. Charles E. Furness of St. Paul; the Minnesota Historical Society has a copy. See also Merrick, *Old Times*, 274; Knut Gjerset and Ludvig Hektoen, "Health Conditions and the Practice of Medicine among the Early Norwegian Settlers," in Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Studies and Records*, 1:18 (Minneapolis, 1926). 89

At Keokuk we received on board Mr C. Butler of New York who accompanied Miss [Anna C.] Lynch the authoress, whose acquaintance I made & with whom I led off a Virginia reel in the cabin to a good old fashioned fiddle.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Butler and Miss Lynch also are mentioned *post*, p. 203. Miss Lynch was a well-known writer of the middle nineteenth century. Before 1851 she had published a volume of poems and several prose works. In 1855 she married Vincenzo Botta, professor of Italian at the University of the City of New York. *Appletons' Cyclopædia*, 1:325.

I shall recall with pleasure my fellow passengers on this trip. A Mr [George A.] Richmond of Boston, residing in St Louis was a happy combination of the Eastern & western man & a gentleman who I hope to meet again. Tom Jackson, an open hearted, good natured Anglo-American, Mr Schultz, the clerk of the boat an intelligent German—Mr. Sexton[,] Mr [Phineas] Banning of Philadelphia [,] Henry Thompson of Baltimore [,] & my friend in the army "Old stokin" I shall not forget.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mayer gives the addresses of Richmond and Banning, *post*, p. 203. The Colonel Bladen Dulany mentioned on the latter page probably was "Old stokin," since a portrait in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40: 29, is labelled "Col. Dulany, U.S.M.C. 'Old Stockin.'" 90

At Davenport & Rock Island we enter upon a seemingly new character of country & climate, the bluffs begin to rise, first into grassy hills with clumps of trees here & there

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seemingly prepared by nature for the farmer, while on the opposite shore a large forest reaching back for miles a gently undulating country the Rapids of Rock Island run between for fifteen miles. Passing these the river becomes of a glassy smoothness & transparency & then [the] air has a peculiar clearness & bracing vigour which is unknown to lower latitudes. The bluffs on one or the other side rise to four & hundred feet clothed from summit to river brink with forests except where their vertical position affords no resting place for trees & the bare rocks[s] are seen, like the ruins of old, castles guarding the entrance to this chosen haunt of nature. Ascending one of these bluffs, we found ourselves 400 feet above the river & beheld a magnificent view of the river as it wended its way thro' the surrounding hills & prairies now & then seeming to the have enclosed with in its arms some chosen spot of beauty, some Island for a fairy home. Large prairies are some times on either side with the bluffs miles distant. Then the hills approach & seem to block up the entrance until in some unexpected direction the river again appears. The scenery is lonely & grand & the absence of all appearance of man's presence replaces that "sympathy" which cultivated scenery excites by a feeling of awe, so that we feel as intruders in this region which nature [ sic ] seems to have set apart as her own.

As we neared Lake Pepin we first had intimation of our having passed thro' this long line of solitude & that we were emerging in a new region on one side civilization had advanced & the log cabin & neat frame of the New England settler looked over the river the Indian village where coquill smoke is still seen & the Scalp dance still celebrated, while the trading house & church are seen surrounded by Indians, half-breeds, French voyageurs, Americans & foreign emigrants & while birch bark canoes & peltries lie by the side of the steamboat & the last "Yankee notion".<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Probably this word picture describes the trading village of Wabasha as it appeared in 1851.

Arrived at St Pauls June 15<sup>th</sup> 1851.<sup>7</sup> As the sun was setting on the 14<sup>th</sup> two indistinct forms were seen gliding close to the shore & as we approached them two canoes, one paddled by a frenchman, the other <sup>7</sup> The arrival of the "Excelsior" on "last Saturday

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morning” is announced in the *Pioneer* for June 19, 1851. As the publication day is a Thursday, this would mean that the boat arrived on June 14. The announcement continues: “She had a drove of cattle on board, to feed the Indians on, during the treaty. ... A barge was towed up by the Excelsior, which is to be left at Saint Paul and filled white sand to be taken to Saint Louis on the next trip of the boat down, to be there in manufacturing glass.” In the same issue of the *Pioneer* the “Excelsior” is advertised to leave St. Paul every alternate Friday for St. Louis. 92 by an Indian were revealed to us. By degrees in the morning more frequent became the intimations of savage presence We passed Kaposia or Little Crow's village<sup>8</sup> — & then the canoes & squaws, cheifs [ sic ] & papooses were frequent sights.

<sup>8</sup> Little Crow was the hereditary chief of the Kaposia band of the Sioux or Dakota Indians. In 1851 his village was situated on the west bank of the Mississippi on part of the site of South Park, a suburb of the present city of South St. Paul. Warren Upham, *Minnesota Geographic Names*, 170, 443 (Minnesota Historical Collections, vol. 17).

St Pauls is situated on a bluff probably about fifty feet above the surface of the river, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country & catching the breeze which sweep down the course of the river & over the adjacent hills. The plain which surmount[s] the bluff is of ample extent for the erection of the proposed “city.” Two years ago it was little more than a mere trading post for the Indians—but already it assumes the appearance of a bustling New England village & well attests the presence of an energetic & *free-soil* population. It is singular to meet so few “old *residenters*” for no one seems to have passed more than one winter here.

Here an entirely different race are seen commingling with the Anglo-Saxon from those we see in the more southern portion of the West. The French were among the first settlers of this region. Here are the descendants of the “voyageurs” the companions of La Salle & Hennepin & they still retain

*Michel Renville*

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### *Henry Belland, Voyageur Hoosanere, or Grey Leg*

95 their national distinctions<sup>9</sup> How different their manner, appearance & attitude from the “Americans” around them They have the vivacity, merry jest & laugh & expressive attitude & gesture of old France. They still speak French, which is heard as much as English & these two with Indian are often heard at once in the same group. They are generally of smaller size than the Americans & of light active figure, they are employed as boatmen, raftsmen & Indian traders. Most of them have Indian or half-breed wives which gives rise to another branch in the population of Minnesota. The scarf sash, pipe & moccasins are the only remnants of the old voyageurs dress to be seen among them. The costume of the voyageurs was a mixture of Indian & European a blanket coat reaching to about the knees, leggings & the breech-clout, & moccasins. The head was covered in summer with a fur or felt hat, adorned with feathers, the hat usually black & somewhat after the “Spanish” form. Sometimes a close fitting woollen cap without visor—somewhat like a night-cap was worn. In Winter the clothing was warmer & a <sup>9</sup> Most of the early French inhabitants of St. Paul were traders who had come from Canada or their descendants. Many of these people were of mixed French and Indian blood. A large number of them are mentioned by name in an article by M. M. Hoffmann entitled “New Light on Old St. Peter's and Early St. Paul,” in *Minnesota History*, 8:27-51 (March, 1927). The voyageurs were the French-Canadian canoemen who played an important role in the fur trade. Their activities and habits are described by Grace Lee Nute in a volume entitled *The Voyageurs* (New York, 1931). <sup>96</sup> “capuchin” hood, often attached to the collar of the coat protected the head. the hair & beard was often worn long & a sash was tied around the waist outside the coat.

C. K. Smith Esq, the Secretary of the Territory & the Governor received me with much kindness<sup>10</sup> & I received a diploma of my election as a member of the Minnesota Historical Society soon after my former connexion with the M[arylan]d Hist[orica]l Society was known.<sup>11</sup> I found Governor Ramsey giving audience to a deputation of Sioux Indians who had come from “Six's” village on the St Peter's [ *Minnesota* ] river to ask supplies of food for their children & families whom they represented to be in a starving condition. Place

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by his side with the Indians seated around with their pipes sending forth 10 Charles K. Smith of Ohio was appointed secretary of Minnesota Territory when it was organized in 1849, and Alexander Ramsey of Pennsylvania became governor. Mayer met Ramsey before going to Minnesota. See *ante*, p. 4. Smith returned to Ohio in 1851, but Ramsey remained in the new commonwealth and became one of its foremost citizens. Chiefly as a result of Smith's efforts, the Minnesota Historical Society was incorporated on October 20, 1849. See Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:257. A sketch of Smith is in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 8:495-497. 11 There is no record of Mayer's membership in the Minnesota Historical Society in its archives or in its *Proceedings* for the years 1849 to 1858 (St. Paul, 1858). Mayer was librarian of the Maryland Historical Society from October 1, 1848, to November 1, 1850. He did not become a member of the latter organization, however, until November 3, 1853, though he was greatly interested in its activities. Journal, 1847-54, p. 41, 77; *Sun*, July 29, 1899; letter of Louis H. Dielman, chairman of the library committee of the Maryland Historical Society, October 12, 1931. 97 dignified volumes of smoke, I had a fine opportunity to observe their manners & mode of speech. An old man arose having given his pipe to his neighbor & shaking hands with the Governor & interpreter, began with much energy & expressive gesture to detail the object of their visit & its causes, pausing at every sentence to shake hands with the governor & to give the interpreter time to translate his speech. at the conclusion of every sentence the other Indians all exclaimed Hoo, i. e. ["] yes, *it is so*." Having concluded, another old man arose with his war-spear in his hand & corroborated his friend's account. The Governor replied by rating them for their want of thrift & for certain violations of treaty which had occurred in their territory & told them that the power of their "great-father" extended from the rising to the setting sun & that no matter where they were they would be punished for their crimes. He concluded by giving them the required supplies & "tickets" for bread at the bakers in S t Paul.<sup>12</sup>

12 Mayer's visit to the governor evidently took place on June 17, for in his diary under that date Ramsey notes: "Had a visit from 2 nd chief of 'Six's' band & his people, complaint—hunger—gave them an order on Tyler for 2 flour, one keg powder & some bread tickets." The Sioux in question were from the village of Little Six or Shakopee, on the site of the present city of the latter name. The Tyler mentioned by Ramsey probably is Hugh Tyler,

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who was “special agent and acting commissary” for the Chippewa treaty at Pembina in the summer of 1851 and who played an important part in the consummation of the Sioux treaties of that year. See Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:276, 238, 302-304. For a note on the name of the Minnesota River, see *post*, ch. 8, f.n. 10. 98

Some of these were fine specimens of Indians, I met them a few hours after in the street & was struck by the peculiar ease & grace of walk & attitudes having all the litheness & “nonchalance” of childhood with the dignity of man, they are remarkably erect, tall, with small hands & feet, & the graceful & varied manner in which their large blankets are worn, depending their majestic folds from their broad shoulders, & calling to mind the dignified occupants, of the senate house or Forum Their rifle carried with so much variety of posture & the num[erous] pouches & trinkets add to their picturesque appearance. Their hair is worn long, some times plaited, & where parted vermillion is rubbed into the seam, feathers, wampum &c also adorn their heads. A shirt of figured calico is sometimes worn & a “breech-clout” always The leggins reach to the middle of the thigh & are attached to the belt by strips of cloth or skin, while a garter is tied below the knee & mocassins cover the feet.

Continued in Vol 2 of Journal13

13 The first entry in volume 2 of the diary is preceded by the following notation:

“Memoranda &c. Tour to Minnesota—1851. Vol. 2. St Paul's Ms to [ *blank in MS.* ] June 23rd to [ *blank in MS.* ] 1851.” The fact that Mayer did not fill in the blanks that he left at this point seems to indicate that he never completed his diary. For a discussion of the possibility that the diary is incomplete or that part of it was lost, see *ante*, p. 25.

The use of mocassins contributes very much to the elegant walk of the indians—the feet have then their 99 natural clasticity & by comparison the wearer of shoes or boots has a hobbled & awkward gate. We, who call ourselves *civilized*, scarce know what the *natural* walk of man is, we are so accustomed to the hampered motions of clodhoppers & dandies. Compared with the figures of the Anglo Saxon the Indian is lighter lither & more erect formed rather for feats of agility than strength. *Power & Strength*, seem the characteristic

of the American. A boat-hand from the steamer is a model for Hercules—a Sioux warrior for Mercury or Mars.

100

## VII Indian Life at Kaposia

Having received an invitation from Dr [Thomas Smith] Williamson, a missionary to the Sioux,<sup>1</sup> to whom I had a letter, to visit him at his residence at the village of Kaposia or Little Crow's village (as it is generally called, that being the cognomen of the chief, whose name is, in Dacotah, "*Chatah-koowamanni*" or Sparrow hawk walks shooting, which by the French traders was corruptly translated "Petite corbeaux," or Little Crow),<sup>2</sup> I was placed under the charge of an Indian who conducted me to his canoe a "dug-out" where his two wives were in attendance to paddle us to their 1 Dr. Williamson, missionary and physician, began his work among the Minnesota Sioux in 1834. For an account of his early activities in this region, see Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:198-200. During his long residence among the Sioux, Williamson acquired a wide knowledge of their customs, and he seems to have given Mayer the benefit of his experience, for numerous notations and corrections in the diary are in his handwriting. 2 Little Crow's Dakota name is given as *Chetan wakan mani*, "the sacred pigeon-hawk which comes walking," in Frederick W. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 1:769 (Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletins*, no. 30—Washington, 1910). Mayer seems to have been a bit uncertain about the chief's name. Some rough sketches of Little Crow made at Kaposia, in the Sketch-books, 40:61, are labelled "'Chatahukooavamanee' or he who pursues the hawks 'Sparrow hawks walks shooting'"; a finished portrait made at the Traverse des Sioux camp on July 2 bears the caption: "Chatannahkawahmanee The hawk that chases walking—alias—Little Crow or Petit Corbeau." 101 residence. One of these, opposite to whom he sat, I being behind him, was evidently the favourite tho' both were young & pleasing in Expression. As we floated down the stream in the twilight, the paddles being lazily piled by our female sailors, my lord occasionally condescended to assist them in their toil & between the intervals of his labor, discussed with his wife their evening meal & the topics of the day—a portion of food



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being passed to the less favoured lady in the stern who with rather a pensive expression occasionally joined in the conversation. The first had the childlike simple expression common to the Indian women & its pleasing effect is greatly due to the white teeth & dark sparkling eyes contrasting with the long black hair falling luxuriantly over the shoulders. They evidently possessed all the coquetry & teasing arts of their civilized sisters.

I have thus far found the Indian women mirthful, & enduring their laborious lot with patience & cheerfulness. They are not as attractive to an artist as the men, they being generally small & heavy, early marriage & constant drudgery having destroyed the symmetry of their forms. Their faces are very similar in expression[,] a good humored innocence of 102 disposition *[blurred]* being evinced by it. As they grow old their faces are marked by lines of care & if ill humor grows with increasing years & they attain sufficient age to acquire the venerable white hair of senicity *[senility]* they are fit models for hags.

[The feet of many of the Indian women seem formed to rival those of the Venus de medici. They possess the same construction, the instep high & the foot arched, the toes strait & fully formed & free in their motions. The directions of the four toes forming a slight angle with the great toe & the second toe projecting beyond it, for it is the longest. The mocassin replaces the sandal & prevents the bones of the feet fro spreading. French shoes distort them by forcing them into a space too small for their reception.]3

3 The paragraph inclosed is written in pencil on a left-hand page facing page 7 of volume 2.

Labour seems evidently to be the misplaced province of woman. Our civilized ladies are in all respects the superiors of their savage sisters. The only one I saw who in anyway attracted my attention was a young woman of about eighteen who was tall, with a figure as yet undestroyed by labor easy & graceful in her motions which were peculiarly feminine, modesty & the absence of stays being characteristics of the Indian women, and example which their more enlightened sisters might occasionally profit by. This, added to the neatness of her dress & glassy blackness of her 103 long hair, black eyes with long dark

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lashes & the pleasing expression of more than usually regular features gave her great advantages of appearance over her fellow squaws. [So bashful was she that I seldom

*Dr. Williamson*

got more than a glance of her & as to sketching it was out of the question.]<sup>4</sup> The women appear to advantage in the canoes, the motion of the paddle serving to display the taper of the arm & wrist & the heaving of a well developed chest.

<sup>4</sup> The sentence inclosed in brackets is crossed out in the original.

Dr Williamson received me kindly & I was lodged comfortably under his hospitable roof for “three or four *sleeps*, “ as the Indians say. The village of “ *Kaposia* “ 104 or “ *the lithe people*, “ is situated on a small piece of bottom land which intervenes between the bluffs & the Mississippi river.<sup>5</sup> It commands a very beautiful view up & down the stream & contains about three hundred souls. The village is composed of two sorts of habitations winter houses & summer houses or *Tipis*[,] a house, or *Waykayas*[,] skin covering[,] & Tipitanka's[,] large.<sup>6</sup> The winter house is a tent made of furless buffalo hides tanned like buck-skin & sewed together, supported on poles & held together at the seam by splints of wood, it being left open at the top to permit the smoke to escape & beneath is an aperture for egress & ingress—thus forming a circular conical edifice with the ends of the poles protruding from the top, the edges of the skin falling over & varying the colour & form. These are the winter habitations and are near ten feet in diameter generally. A fire is made in the centre & the occupants repose around it. In warmer weather it is

<sup>5</sup> A similar meaning for the name “Kaposia” is given by A. W. Williamson in a list of “Minnesota Geographical Names Derived from the Dakota Language, with Some that are Obsolete,” published in the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, 1884, p. 107 (St. Paul, 1885). He declares that the name meaning “light” was given to the people of Little Crow's band “in honor of their skill in the favorite game of *lacrosse* . ... Success depended largely on swiftness (lightness).” For the location of Kaposia, see *ante*, p. 92 n; a picture of the village appears *post*, p. 112. <sup>6</sup> The Sioux word *tanka* means “large”; thus *tipitanka* may be translated as “large house.” Mayer applies the term, variously spelled, to

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the summer house of the Sioux. The *wakeya* was the "skin tent," probably the same as the ordinary *tipi*. 105 sometimes used. It is then thrown open, the aperture of entrance being enlarge & the portions of slack skin supported on sticks, thus giving rise to two graceful festoons from either side of the seam.

[Teepees or Tipi (French pron.?) belonging to Indians of the plains are sometimes forty feet in diam[e]t[e]r. The poles of tamarak are of large size to the protruding end of the tallest of which is suspended a horses tail as indicating the residence of a principal warrior or a chief, the exterior being decorated with diagrams of his principal actions. I known not why, but there is a *home* feeling about the interior of a teepee. As I have lounged on a buffalo robe by the light of a smouldering fire, It reminds me of my childish positions on the parlour rug in front of a hickory fire, during the winter evenings. The teepee is rendered very comfortable in the winter by piling straw around the exterior & strewing it within, & laying buffalo robes & furs upon it. Without, the snow soon accumulates above the straw leaving only the upper portion of the tent visible. Closing the entrance & building a fire it becomes a snug refuge from the in-element winters. Tepees last four or five years, but owing [to] the rotting of the lower portion of the skins decrease in size.<sup>7</sup> The tipi or skin lodge is (tender tilia or lynn ——) peculiar to the western or Dacotah branch of the Indian race; the Algonquin <sup>7</sup> This sentence is written in pencil at the top of the left-hand page facing page 11 of volume 2. 106 having lived in bark-wigwams. The peculiar form of war club used by the western Indian was unknown to the Algonquin, as well as that style of dress in which the long fringes of skin, falling from the arms & leggins & adapted to the adornment of the *horse* man. The Algonquin dress was pedestrian, the Dacotah equestrian.

The Winnebago leggins are loose & gaitered & like the Sioux who do not gaiter are *gartered* below the knee. The Chippeway garter at the ankle. the Winnebago hair is never brought forward.]<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets occurs on two left-hand pages facing pages 10 and 11 of volume 2. The second paragraph is written in pencil.

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The summer house is similar in form to our log cabin, tho' more nearly approaching a square, & the roof reaching nearer to the ground. It is formed of a frame work of saplings tied together with the [inner] bark of the [quaking aspen]<sup>9</sup> covered and interwoven with pieces of bark, the entrance is closed by a piece of buffalo hide which hangs by a point from above the door. Within, a platform or divan of about five feet in width & elevated some two feet & a half from the ground, extends around three sides of the apartment leaving a quadrangular space in front of the <sup>9</sup> The words inclosed in brackets are crossed out in the original manuscript. Elm and basswood bark were commonly used by the Sioux in the building of their lodges. For an excellent description of the construction of the Sioux summer house, see Samuel W. Pond, "The Dakotas or Sioux in Minnesota as They Were in 1834," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 12:353. 107 door & in the centre of the lodge about six feet square, in the centre of which a fire is made. Over this hangs the kettle. Formerly crockery of Indian manufacture took the place of the copper Kettles supplied by the traders. The smoke from the fire escapes thro' an aperture in the roof which also serves to admit the light. There are sometimes two of these. At the back of the divan skins are hung & robes & other peltry cover the surface, on which the inmates repose surrounded by their arms, trinkets, women & dogs, the combination of so many picturesque ac[c]essories & the light admitted in so *artistical* a manner contributing to make a scence [ *sic* ] full of scenic effect.

These houses are certainly very comfortable and admirably adapted to the indulgence of the indolent disposition of the Indian. Here he sleeps at night, and during the day lolls at his ease, smoking, chatting with his friends or repairing his arms & ornaments, all other occupations being considered unworthy the attention of a man. [During the season of occupying the Teepeetonkah they sleep much during the day, except when on a hunting excursion.]<sup>10</sup> All the drudgery, the work of cooking, paddling the canoe, bringing firewood, pitching the tipi,<sup>11</sup> in fact <sup>10</sup> The sentence inclosed in brackets is written at the foot of a left-hand page facing page 12 of volume 2 over the following notation in pencil in the handwriting of Dr. Williamson: "Sleeps at night? During the season of occupying the

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tipitonta or bark houses the men sleep as much by day as by night that is the young men unless when he goes a hunting." 11 Above this word, in pencil, Dr. Williamson wrote "teepee." 108 all the occupations of Indian life except such as appertain to war or the hunt or fishing<sup>12</sup> devolve upon the women who seem to [bear their laborious lot with cheerfulness & seem]<sup>13</sup> to consider department as their appropriate sphere.

<sup>12</sup> Mayer originally wrote: "except such as appertain to war or the hunt divulge upon the women." Opposite this statement, on the left-hand page facing page 13, Williamson wrote in pencil: "the hunt & fishing." Mayer then seems to have corrected his first statement. <sup>13</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is crossed out in the original.

At the gable end & over the door is shed or flat roof extending some eight or ten feet from the building & supported by posts unhewn. This furnishes a shady retreat where the inhabitants generally sit on benches or rather *tables* constructed on either side of the door on mats woven in tasteful patterns of rushes, by the squaws, while the children & dogs play around in all the wildness of savage license. These scaffolds are used for drying maize & dcl031;c and during hot nights for sleeping. Here sits the squaw (or tawechew (wife) "squaw" not being a Dacotah word,) <sup>14</sup> sewing mocassins or dressing a child's hair while she gossips to her fellow & watches the papoose<sup>15</sup> which <sup>14</sup> The Sioux or Dakota word for wife is *tawin*; the word *tawincu* means "his wife." The word *squaw* is Narraganset origin, according to Hodge. "As a term for woman," he writes, "*squaw* has been carried over the length and breadth of the United States and Canada." *Handbook of American Indians*, 2:629; Stephen R. Riggs, *Dictionary of the Dakota Language* (Washington, 1852).

<sup>15</sup> Facing this passage, which is on page 14 of volume 2, Dr. Williamson wrote in pencil: "papoose is not Dakota it should be hokshiyokope." 109 hangs from the roof above. On the top of the shed are often laid the canoes of birch-bark & about them are seen the male children with their mimic bows & arrows, hunt, & war-dance, & not unusually "my lord" & his friends ascend to overlook their own & their neighbors residences & occupations. [A few feet in front of the door of his residence is hung upon a pole, somewhat after the manner of the classic "trophies", the "medicine" of the Indian. This may be any article whatever, such as a particular animal's skin, a curiously shaped stone, a piece of wood, a trinket

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of some sort, any thing, in fact, to which the Indian ascribes a particular connexion or "correspondence" with himself.]<sup>16</sup> Within, the pipe is passed round while the war story, llegend [ sic ] or jest is told, or some 16 The passage in brackets appears on two left-hand pages facing pages 14 and 15 of volume 2. 110 "medicine" or mystery matter discussed. One or two are engaged in making a pipe or a ramrod or feathering an arrow another is humming the monotonous music of the dance, accompanying himself on a drum of native manufacture, while a woman is braiding and adorning her husband's glossy tresses. The venison is simmering in the kettle and a dog half concealed by the cumbrous trappings of a saddle is catching musquitos under his masters feet. In such occupations as these the Indian whiles away the year, the daily routine of sleeping, smoking & gossiping & an occasional swim in the adjoining river, being varied by a deer hunt, fishing, a visit to the adjoining towns, & the various dances, ball plays, & mysteries of savagedom. The houses were arranged in rows with the "tipis" intervening here & there, pleasantly varying the angularity & ruggedness of the long succession of "tetonkas." x

[ x It is seldom that the Indians congregate in villages during the winter. After the gathering of their crop of corn in the fall, they seperate into parties of from one to three or four famil[i]es, & with their *tipis* depart for the woods which afford shelter from the inclemencies of winter & brings them nearer to the game on which they subsist during that season. Hunting & trapping for their own food & to procure skins for traffic are their occupations until the spring when they return to their village to plant the corn, in which employment the women are the chief actors. 111

*Sioux Winter Lodge, or Tipi Sioux Summer Lodge*

112

*Kaposia Village*

113 This important business over, the spring-hunt takes place, the women generally remaining in the village.<sup>17</sup> Those Indians who live upon the woodless plains of Nebraska & the Far-west lead a more nomadic & wandering life constantly following the trail of the

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buffalo. They have no tetonkahs, not being fixed residents of any particular spot. The skin lodge is portable & their only shelter.]<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The object of the spring hunt was to catch muskrats. As it began in March, before the ice broke up on the lakes and streams, it is likely that the corn was planted after, rather than before, the hunt. Pond, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 12:370, 372. <sup>18</sup> The paragraph inclosed in brackets occurs on three left-hand pages facing pages 15 to 17 of the diary. Its position in the text is indicated by an "X" both in the text and at the beginning of the insertion. Mayer revised parts of the passage, in pencil, making it read as follows: "Hunting & trapping for their own food & to procure skins for traffic are their occupations until the spring [when they] go to their sugar camps, the men hunting muskrats whence they return to their village to plant the corn, in which employment the women are the chief actors. This important business over, they return to their village to enjoy the ball play, gambling, &c or go in search of berries &c Those Indians who live upon the woodless plains of Nebraska and Missouri territories lead a more nomadic & wandering life."

In the distance on the hill which overlooks the village [*Kaposia*], their former place of residence, repose on elevated biers, the dead.<sup>19</sup> Here retires the mother & the widow to weep over the loss of a child or husband & to pray the great-spirit for their happiness <sup>19</sup> The Sioux regularly placed their dead on scaffolds or in the branches of trees. The "burial customs and mourning" of these people are described in detail by Pond, In *Minnesota Historical collections*, 12:478—485. The Kaposia cemetery was a famous one, since most of the travelers who visited the upper Mississippi saw and described it. One of these travelers, Henry Lewis, includes an excellent picture of a Sioux burial scaffold in his *Illustrirte Mississippithal*, 82 (Leipzig, 1923). <sup>114</sup> in the spirit land.<sup>20</sup> The cradle of the child & the arms of the warrior are placed by their side that their spirits may serves [*sic*] their former owners as they did during his life. The scalps of hostile Chippeways, the hereditary enemy of the Dacotah, stretched upon hoops are placed by the body of the departed as evidence [to the great spirit]<sup>21</sup> of the valour of his race, and as a propitiation of the favour of the diety. On the death of an Indian his body is wrapped in his robe or blanket, & since the intercourse with the whites a coffin is, if possible procured. It is then placed upon a scaffold, raised six or seven feet from the ground, where it remains for several months, & even years, often until it falls to pieces & the bones are scattered upon the ground, to



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be collected & deposited in a grave. The coffins are often bound around with a red or brilliant colored piece of cloth, which makes them conspicuous at a distance. [Frequently portions of choice food are place at the grave for the use of the deceased, who consumes the spiritual portion, when the young men eat the remainder. A watch is concealed near-by who sees that no animal disturbs the repast & when a sufficient length of time has elaps[e]d for the consumption of 20 The last ten words of this sentence are inclosed in parentheses and followed by a question mark in pencil. Mayer seems to have doubted the accuracy of his statement, for above the line, in pencil, he wrote: "that their spirits may not injure them." 21 The words inclosed in brackets are crossed out in the original. 115 the spiritual portion, she leaves it. If placed hot, it looses the spiritual portion with its caloric.]22

22 The passage inclosed in brackets is written in pencil on a left-hand page facing page 17 of volume 2.

Soon after my arrival, while walking through the village my attention was attracted by a prolonged rattling, accompanied by a moaning, monotonous sort of chaunt [alternating with grunts & growling]23 proceeding from a tipi, which was closed complet[e]ly while fern leaves with which the interior was strewn protruded from beneath the edges of the skins. I was told that it was occupied by a sick child over whom a conjuror was performing his incantations in order that he might remove the cause of his ailment.

23 The words inclosed in brackets are written in pencil in the original diary.

[When afflicted by any misfortune they attribute it generally to the ill favour of some of the "medicine" men. An Indian at "Traverse-des Sioux,["] whose child is diseased believes her misfortune to be the result of the jealousy of his relative on account of his influence with the traders.]24

24 The passage inclosed in brackets is written on a left-hand page facing page 18 volume 2. Since Mayer here refers to Indians at Traverse des Sioux, it may be inferred that he added this note after he went to that place.

When a person is sick they believe some spirit, (with which they think every object to be endowed), to have taken possession of & overcome the spirit which naturally belongs to

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the sick man. This spirit is of course an evil one, & all means are resorted to 116 by the conjuror to remove it. [When conjuring they dressed with little regard to display—the face painted black the hair disarranged & his blanket & breechcloth his only covering. [L.J.] Boury saw a conjurer lately in this dress shaking a rattle over the head of a patient. He grunt[e]d & for some time & then an assistant held a figure of a thunder-bird suspended from the end of a stick, before the door of the tent.<sup>25</sup> The conjuror fired at it with powder & then contin[ue]d his mummary.]<sup>26</sup> Prayers, supplications & threats, The most hideous sounds & grimaces [imitations of the concealed animal & grunts & groans]<sup>27</sup> are made to frighten away the spirit, & when these have been carried to as great an extent as the abilities or judgement of the conjuror permit him, he notifies the friends of the sick man that they must <sup>25</sup> The conjuror and his patient are pictured by Mayer in his Sketchbooks, 45:34; some drawings of “thunder birds” appear 42:71. The belief in a marvelous bird, whose voice was the thunder and who “used lightning as a means of destroying enemies,” prevailed among the Sioux in common with many other tribes of Indians. See Pond, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 12:403. Boury was an artist and a member of the party that went to Traverse des Sioux. Evidently the two men kept in touch with one another after leaving the West, for in his Journal, under date of January 18, 1854, Mayer records: “Boury called to borrow my Indian sketches. He is about leaving for Paris—his ideas of Art being merely imitative—to study drawing there.” Mayer drew a sketch of Boury at Traverse des Sioux. Journal, 1847-54, p. 142; Sketchbooks, 42:116. <sup>26</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is written in pencil on left-hand pages facing pages 18 and 19 of volume 2. <sup>27</sup> The words inclosed in brackets are written in pencil in the original diary. 117 be ready with the arms to destroy the spirit as it escapes from the body of the deceased. Accordingly when the din & clamor of rattle & voice have reached their height, a signal is given & the friends who stand at the door of the lodge discharge their arrows or guns at the invisible demon as he flies thro' the air. Should it be found that this effort has been unsuccessful, the conjuror repeats his hocus-pocus with whatever additional “medicine” he can summon to his aid. Should the man die, the reason is plain, the spirit was stronger than his “medicine” or else that another evil spirit had entered. Should the invalid recover

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he is a great doctor, & his medicine is all-powerful. "What fools!" we exclaim, "to be thus deluded," but, does not a very similar confidence exist among our *enlightened* brethren? Rattles are not used but "puffs" often have a similar effect. The "Wechastah wakun," *man spirit, wonderful, mystery*, is unknown but M Ds are manufactured by the gross from materials inferior to many an Indian.<sup>28</sup> Fern leaves are considered as peculiarly appropriate to the presence of the man of mystery & are therefore strewn upon the interior of the lodge.

<sup>28</sup> Accounts of the customs connected with the activities of the medicine man, known among the Sioux as *walcan witshasha* or "mystery man," appear in Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 1:837, and in Pond, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 12:475-477.

The medicine man, in an Indian community is looked upon as the great wise-man and priest of the 118 band to which he belongs. He is consulted on all occasions, and his opinion is considered almost infallible as it bears the stamp of divine origin & is the result of supernatural influences. His power is only surpassed by that of the chief who consults him on all occasions of importance. The number of medicine men is not limited but any one can begin business for himself provided he has the requisite talents for hocus-pocus & humbug, and is a member of the medicine mystery, and entitled to take part in the medicine-dance.<sup>29</sup> The medicine mystery or college is a secret society composed of the principal men of the tribe who are initiated into the mystery with great ceremonies & bound to secrecy; of what, it is difficult to say for the secret has never been divulged to any white man & those who have been longest among them know no more than the merest stranger. The dance & medicine feast take place at the same time and are the principal festival of the order.

<sup>29</sup> The medicine men were not necessarily members of the medicine dance society, although they frequently belonged to that organization. A good account of the medicine dance of the Sioux is given by Pond, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 12:409-415.

On the death of an individual, his relations, as a manifestation of their grief, neglect all personal adornment, cleanliness, or attention to dress. Their hair is cut off, their faces

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painted black, they wear the poorest clothing & often lacerate themselves & “mortify the flesh” in the most painful manner. This mourning cannot be discontinued until a medicine

*Chief Little Crow*

*Hoohamaza, or Iron Leg*

121 feast has been given by the near[est relative of the deceased, who collects the bones of his ancestor, which by this time have fallen from the bier, preceeding the burial of which the medicine-feast & dance is celebrated.

All persons who are thought worthy of the honor & who are able to pay for it, (the initial fee, which is divided among the members, being often very large) are prepared to be inaugurated as members of the [ *medicine* ] lodge. A large lodge or arbor is erected capable of accommodating the members & the candidates for admission who having been seated around it & the vessels containing the foods placed over the fires, the ceremonies are commenced with the initiation of the candidates. This takes place during the dance. Each member rises, with his medicine-bag in his hand & dancing round to the sound of the drum, points his medicine bag in the manner of a gun, at the member to be admitted. The effect is instantaneous, he is seized with violent convulsions, retchings & spasms, during which he vomits or pretends to vomit, or else to bring out of his arm, leg or breast, a bead or small shell which is afterwards preserved with sacred care in his medicine-bag. Previous to entering the lodge the candidate has been privately instructed in his part. Two beads are given him one of which he swallows, the other he is directed to conceal in his mouth or elsewhere & to produce it after having simulated violent spasms & 122 convulsions. His signal for performing is the presentation of another's medicine bag at him. All finally go thro' a similar performance. Each in his turn presents his medicine-bag to his neighbor who falls as tho' shot. All go thro' this mummary & after some continuance of the ceremonies the feasting follows on which occasion every one is expected to eat to repletion & to devour all that is set before him. Presents prepared by the host & his relatives are then distributed to the guests. These are often valuable, as a horse, a gun]

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or a lodge. The bones are then interred, the ceremonies ended & the mourners at liberty to resume their accustomed habits. Children who are subject to epileptic fits, convulsions & extraordinary dreams &c are generally brought up with a belief of their supernatural mission & at the proper age are installed as "great-medicine" men. To such an extent is their belief in this mystery carried that we cannot doubt their sincerity as I have heard a father performing these incantations & singings over his sick child. This institution is said to be of comparatively late origin, having been instituted about fifty years ago by the "Shawnee Prophet"] 30 The impression among the traders & those best acquainted with the Indians is that this famous secret consists in the knowledge of the fact that there is no secret 30 The passage inclosed in brackets, ending here and beginning on p. 121, is written on left-hand pages facing pages 24, 25, 26, and 27 of volume 2. The final sentence is written in pencil. Tenskwatawa, the "Shawnee Prophet," was a twin brother of Tecumseh, the famous Shawnee chief. In 1805 the prophet called his tribesmen about him and "announced himself as the bearer of a new revelation from the Master of Life." Mayer's impressions of Tenskwatawa's teachings seem to be inaccurate, since he denounced "witchcraft practices and medicine juggleries." For a sketch of the "Shawnee Prophet" and his teachings, see Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 2:729. 123 at all, except that of decieving [ sic ] themselves & the uninitiated with the idea of their greater insight into affairs than their neighbors, X a supposed connection with the spiritual world. note X

A stroll thro' the village [ *Kaposia* ] on the day after my arrival gave me some idea of my probable success in procuring sketches of Indian character. Pursuing my usual plan of taking my sitters unawares & without reference to their permission—or disinclination I met with various success. Many expressing surprise on discovering my object, & laughing immoderately at the result, & showing no objection to my continuing, while others observed with stoical indiff[er]ence & coldly declined being sitters.

The crowd of children, women dogs & youths who collected around me while I was sketching a "tipi" "teepee" gave me some notion of the extent of hydropathic treatment among them & the conclusion was, by no means, favourable to the cleanly habits of my

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friends. This is however greatly the result of necessity, for few have a sufficiently large wardrobe to enable them to make frequent changes in their costume. In the summer they bathe frequently, especially the younger portion of the community, the 124 presence of unpleasant odours & apparent uncleanness is therefore more attributable to the absence of the wash tub than of the bath. In attempting to sketch an old woman, I received a large portion of the Dacotah vocabulary of imprecations & expressions of countenance worthy of Hecate. They think that I acquire some influence over them by possessing their portraits—some have no such superstition, but consider it an honor.

I was invited to enter the lodge of the Indian \* who had brought me down the evening before, & I found him with his friends smoking & chatting. The pipe was passed round & smoked two or three whiffs & found the “Kinnikennick” quite agreeable. Their pipe-bowls are made of a red stone of close grain & susceptible of a high-polish. It seems a fine quality of sandstone & is procured at the “Pipe-stone quarry” which is situated [ *blank in MS.* ] distant [ *blank in MS.* ] The stems are of wood highly ornamented with porcupine quills, feathers & horse hair,—& the Kinnikennick is the inner bark of the willow dried & smoked with a small proportion of tobacco.<sup>31</sup>

\* Hoohamaza or Iron-leg [ *author's note* .] <sup>31</sup> Various kinds of bark were mixed with tobacco in the making of kinnikinick. The red stone from which the Indians made their pipe bowls was “an indurated clay, graduating into red shale,” which was secured at a quarry in what is now Pipestone County in southwestern Minnesota. The stone is known as “catlinite,” in honor of George Catlin, the “eminent painter of Indian scenery and personages,” who visited the quarry in the summer of 1836. Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:119-121; George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2:201-206 (London, 1842). 125

In company with Dr Williamson I visited the chief “Little Crow” to whom I was introduced as a friend of Captain [Seth] Eastman, U.S.A. which was evidently a recommendation to his regard, the Captain having for many years been stationed at Fort Snelling, became intimately acquainted with the Indians and was much liked by them.<sup>32</sup> His admirable sketches of the scenery of this country and of the Indians give him a high rank as an

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amateur artist, & [coming in the same capacity seemed a natural consequences to the Dacotahs].<sup>33</sup> The chief is a man of some forty five years of age & of a very determined & ambitious nature, but withall exceedingly gentle and dignified in his deportment. His face is full of intelligence when he is in conversation & his whole bearing is that of a gentleman. He declined sitting to me until he was dressed in a manner more becoming his rank, he being clothed in nature's garb with the exception of his breech clout.<sup>34</sup> His uncle <sup>32</sup> For an account of Mayer's meeting with Eastman, see *ante*, p. 4. While Eastman was stationed at Fort Snelling he became much interested in the Indian life of the upper Mississippi region, of which he made numerous records in pictorial form. His wife, Mrs. Mary H. Eastman, wrote several volumes of western sketches, which he illustrated. <sup>33</sup> The passages in brackets is crossed in the original diary. <sup>34</sup> Mayer did draw some crude sketches of Little Crow's head at Kaposin. See his Sketchbooks, 40:61. A large drawing of the chief in elaborate costume, dated at Traverse des Sioux, July 2, 1851, is in the Ayer Collection. <sup>126</sup> Hoosaneree, (Grey leg) is a venerable old patria[r]ch & affable & gentlemanly in his manners<sup>35</sup> —indeed, I have seldom met with the same number of persons taken promiscuously from the ranks of civilized life who possessed so much genuine politeness, gentlemanly feeling & kindness of manner as the Kaposia Indians.

<sup>35</sup> A picture of this Indian is in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 41:50.

This chief succeeded his father in the office of chief—he was absent from his village for some time & during his absence his brother had endeavoured to usurp his situation. As “*little-crow*” returned to his village & was nearing the shore in his canoe, his brother leveled his rifle. little crow saw it & dodged, the ball, well aimed, passed thro' both fore-arms as he grasped his paddle—and he bears the marks to this day. his brother was shortly after killed by the tribe for this offense.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Another account of this incident, which occurred in the summer of 1846, by F. V. Lamare-Picquot, a French traveler, appears in *Courrier des Etats-Unis* (New York) for March 12, 1847. It has been translated by Anne H. Blegen and printed in Minnesota History, 6:275-77 (September, 1925).



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Early in the morning speech[e]s from the chief & “medicine bottle” a very loquacious & old Indian, & a principal man, announced that the hunters would depart in search of deer that day.<sup>37</sup> Soon, the young men were seen emerging from their lodges catching their horses, saddling them & providing the various <sup>37</sup> Two sketches of “Wah-kon-ojanjan or the Sacred light, or Medicine-bottle” are in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 40:77.

*Sioux Children, Kaposia*

*Departing for a Hunt, Kaposia*

129 necessities for a residence of some days in the woods. The costume was different from any I had seen & as they wended their way through the dell leading thro' the bluffs, they seemed like knights of old, crusaders with long white cloaks & capoted monks who grasped the lance and sword for Holy church & savior's praise, some like rude Gothic bishops arrayed in temple copes as fit for fray as feast. The hoods which they wore are the usual winter headdress of the Dacotah, having been introduced by the French trappers at an early period of their intercourse & their name the “Capuch( *in* )”<sup>38</sup> indicates their origin in the old world. They are made of an oblong piece of blanket doubled & sewed together on one side. This seam passes from the forehead to the crown of the head & the hood is tied under the chin. [This “capuchon” when attached to the coat give that garment the name of a “capote” These coats are made of blanket “without a waist” & the “capuchon” is sewed to the collar. It is bound with a belt or sash in which the Indian or voyageur carries his pouch, pipe, & knife. The blanket is sometimes bound around the waist by a belt & disposed so as to answer the purpose of a coat.]<sup>39</sup> The blanket is put on in a manner resembling <sup>38</sup> Mayer seems to have been in doubt about the spelling of this word, since above the final syllable, which he inclosed in parentheses, he wrote “ *on*. ” <sup>39</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is written on a left-hand page facing page 30 of the diary. The first sentence is crossed out; the final sentence is in pencil. 130 a cope, over a rude blanket coat, the leggings cover the lower extremities as usual, tho' of less showy materials than on more ceremonies occasions. The rifle, & pow[d]er horn, & pouch, the ever ready pipe,

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stuck in the belt, a pouch for the “kinnikennick” the knife with it's ornamented scabbard, the camp kettle slung to the saddle &, the blankets & skins, & ornamental gear of the horses are the accessories. The numerous picturesque groups that were formed & dissolved as they prepared to depart employed my pencil, altho' the rapidity of their motions & the prejudice against my art militated somewhat against my success. The hoods were worn on this occasion as a protection against the musquitos which abound in this country.

The Indians of the Kaposia band have made but small advances in civilization yet they are among the most sober, honest & best conditioned of their race in the neighborhood of Fort Snelling. Some few have professed Christianity and several are educated, being able to read & write their own language. They were the pupils of the missionaries who have instructed them from books printed in Dacotah for purposes of instruction. The principal portions of the bible & a book of hymns have also been translated into the language and a paper entitle[d] “Dacotah Tawaxitku”<sup>40</sup> or “the Dacotah friend” is now published at 40 The second word of this title is written in pencil in the handwriting of Dr. Williamson. 131 St Pauls edited by the Rev Gideon H. Pond.<sup>41</sup> The word Dacotah, by which name all that nation of Indians called by the French “ *Sioux* “ is designated, signifies a friend or a nation of friends—some translate it freely—“One of many”.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> A list of books in the Dakota language, including a spelling book, readers, translations of portions of the Bible, and prayer books appear in Riggs, *Dakota Language*, xii. *The Dakota Tawaxitku Kin, or the Dakota Friend* is among the works listed and is described as a “small monthly paper, in Dakota and English, published at St. Paul by the Dakota Mission.” A file of this paper, which appeared monthly from November, 1850, to August, 1852, is in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society. Gideon H. Pond, its editor, and his brother, Samuel W. Pond, in 1834 went to Minnesota a independent missionaries; they later became affiliated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. See Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:183. <sup>42</sup> Riggs, in his *Dakota Language*, describes the word “dakota” as an adjective meaning “feeling affection for, friendly”; Hodge, in his *Handbook of American Indians*, 1:376, explains that it means “allies.” The word “Sioux,” according to Dr. Folwell, is “the white man's contraction of Nadouessioux, ‘adder.’ a spiteful Chippewa nickname.” *Minnesota*, 1:79n.

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Five or six young Sioux girls have been taken into the family of Dr Williamson where they are instructed in their own language & receive the same English education and attention accorded to his children. A teacher has been placed here by [the] government & receives a regular salary but either from want of success in his efforts or inertia on his part there was no school at the time of my visit, altho' frequent applications are made to Dr W for admittance to his family.<sup>43</sup> There are difficulties attending a day school, <sup>43</sup> The latter part of this statement originally read as follows: "the school has not been carried on for some years, altho' frequent applications are made to Dr W for admittance to his family." Opposite it, on a left-hand page, appears the following notation in pencil in the handwriting of Dr. Williamson: "no school when I was there." Mayer evidently accepted Williamson's correction, for he crossed out part of his statement and wrote above the line: "there was no school at the time of my visit." <sup>132</sup> which are obviated in that where the pupils are constantly under the influence of their instructor & his family. Many causes are assigned for the failure of these schools, viz the intrigues of the trader, some of whom consider it their interest to keep the Indians in ignorance<sup>44</sup> the prejudice of the Indians to advancement & the inaction of the teachers. It is difficult to say which or whether all combined is the cause. I heard the children at Dr W's recite & sing & they seemed in all respects equal to the generality of white children, in regard to intellect.<sup>45</sup> Their language <sup>44</sup> Mayer originally wrote: "Many causes are assigned for the failure of these schools, viz the intrigues of the traders, whose interest it is to keep the Indians in ignorance." Opposite this statement, on a left-hand page, appears the following notation in pencil in the handwriting of Dr. Williamson: "some of whom consider it their interest." In accordance with this suggestion, Mayer crossed out the words "whose" and "it is" and wrote above the line: "some of whom consider it their." <sup>45</sup> The government teacher at Kaposia was S. M. Cook. In his report for 1851 he stated that "the school under my care has during the last year numbered, daily attendance, seven; number enrolled, twenty-one." The school was not a success; according to Dr. Williamson its failure was due to reports spread among the Indians to the effect that they might receive the funds reserved for educational purposes "in cash if they would keep their children out of school." The mission school that Mayer mentions was

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taught by Dr. Williamson's sister, Miss Jane S. Williamson. A number of her pupils boarded in Dr. Williamson's home or in the home of another white family living at Kaposia. Spelling, reading in English and Sioux, arithmetic, and geography were among the subjects taught in this school. Indian Office, *Reports*, 1851, p. 175-177, 182. 133 is well adapted to Music & the hymns which they sung were far more harmonious in their sound than [than] the English originals, altho' the Dacotah has not a softened sound in conversation; but is rather harsh & guttural.

I bid farewell to the Doctor, much gratified with my visit & he procured me two Indian women who promised to take me to St Paul for a "consideration." As I entered the canoe he desired me particularly to observe the features of one, & for that purpose I placed myself opposite to her—but this was a breach of Dacotah etiquette not be permitted for her gestures & expression soon informed me that I must turn my back on the ladies, & substitute the contemplation of the surrounding scenery & the back of her half-breed son who sat in the bow and assisted the women in navigating our craft. Swiftly sped the light canoe altho' stemming the current of the impetuous Mississippi now swelled to it[s] largest size. But the skill of the *voyageurs* directed our boat beneath the bending willows and meeting-boughs overhead, into the quiet sloughs between the Island & main shore. here we sped more rapidly thro' this forest canal, passed trees curled by lightning & storm into the water, & by drift logs of huge size, pine trees escaped from the forests one hundred miles above the falls of 134 S t Antony. At last we emerged into the broad & rapid river & I lay in the bottom of the canoe, lazily admireing the scenery of this most beautiful of rivers until we reached St Paul & I landed again among the voyageurs, Yankees, French & Indians, with their peltries, notions, oxen, & pipes.

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### VIII Social Life at Old Fort Snelling

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June 24<sup>th</sup> 1851. Left S t Paul for Fort Snelling where I arrived in an hour & was politely received by Franklin Steele Esq. to whom I had a letter, he introduced me to his wife, formerly Miss [Anna] Barney of Baltimore.<sup>1</sup> I was enabled to procure board at Mr [Philander] Prescotts the interpreter & superintendant of Indian farming. He is an old resident of this country & familiar with the Indians, speaking their language fluently & connected with them by marriage.<sup>2</sup> His long intercourse with them seems to have given him a reserved manner <sup>1</sup> Franklin Steele was the sutler at Fort Snelling from 1838 to 1858. He was a prominent figure in frontier Minnesota, particularly in the development of the lumber industry. Hansen, *Old Fort Snelling*, 87; Stanchfield, "History of Pioneer Lumbering on the Upper Mississippi and Its Tributaries," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 9:354. <sup>2</sup> Philander Prescott settled in the vicinity of Fort Snelling in 1820. He married Mary Keehei, a Sioux woman of the Lake Calhoun band. See Warren Upham and Mrs. Rose B. Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies, 1655-1912*, 392, 615 (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 14). Prescott's report as "Superintendent of farming for the Sioux" for 1851 is in Indian Office, *Reports*, 1851, p. 173. 136 quite unusual in this country. He seems a well-meaning man, but I should preferr him a little more communicative.

The accomodations are rude in many respects & Shade of my grandmother! how would your ideas of housekeeping be outraged were you to witness the condition, optically & nasally of this domicil. The *loft* where your grandson reposes has the *musty* smell of the accumulated cobwebs of years, enhanced by the peculiar Indian odor, far different from that spicy import of Hindoostan which emanated from thy kitchen oh, revered old-lady, "Tis the smell of *stale* kinnikennick smoke, the incense arising from unwashed utensils & congregated greases, arising thro' the chinks of my *lofty* floor, from the kitchen beneath. Add to this, want of ventilation & a serenade in touching strains performed by a select band of Minnesota minstrels, vulgo, Musquitos—such are the luxuries of travel! yet do we not app[r]eciate *home* the more. We learn how others live & are happy, returning thanks for their enjoyments(!) yet we see *grumblers* in neat well ventilated whitewashed & carpeted garrets, eligibly situated in the most fashionable streets of our cities. Indeed,

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I have undergone a gradual descent in my accommodations since leaving home where I sleep in an “*attic*” & I now, as I write this, find myself separated from Mother earth by a buffalo robe & my great-coat, sheltered from a pelting storm by the tent roof, [of my friend Governor Ramsey

*On the Mississippi between Kaposia and St. Paul* Mayer is second from the right.

*Interior of Prescott's House, Fort Snelling*

139 of Minnesota]<sup>3</sup> more than one hundred miles from the *comforts* of Fort Snelling, surrounded by wild Indians & a country where no white men but traders & missionaries live nearer than St Paul, yet I consider that is an ascent, figuratively speaking, from the garret, if I may dignify those quarters with the name of my homely bedroom, which I occupied at the interpreters.<sup>4</sup> Yet a residence at Mr P's had advantages. His business & intercourse with the Indians brings many of them to his house & they furnish studies for thought & pencil which I should lose in more comfortable quarters.

<sup>3</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is crossed out in the original. <sup>4</sup> This portion of the diary was evidently written after Mayer reached Traverse des Sioux.

[His son in law, a tall raw boned Yankee, of rather amiable qualities is misnamed *Petty*-John, but John is unfortunately of enormous altitude & joined after the manner of a steam engine.<sup>5</sup> His motions, actions, & voice are all on the ponderous, hard & harsh style of execution as musicians would say. He walks the floor & an earth quake seems approaching, he asks me for <sup>5</sup> Prescott's son-in-law was Eli Pettijohn, a native of Ohio who went to Fort Snelling in 1841 as a government employee to furnish supplies and teach farming to the Sioux. He is listed in the manuscript schedules of the Fort Snelling census for 1850 as a farmer, thirty-two years of age. His wife, Lucy, was aged twenty-one. In the late seventies Pettijohn went to California, where he began the manufacture of the breakfast foods since known by his name. See a sketch of Mrs. Prescott in the Minnesota Historical Society Scrapbooks, 1:16, and an obituary sketch of Pettijohn in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 23, 1915. The census schedules are in the possession of

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the Minnesota Historical Society. 140 the salt & I am startled by a trumpet blast. Night & morning we have prayer & singing (be it far from me to ridicule any one's devotions,) & after "brother" Prescott who is short & purse & wears large silver spectacles & an expression of devotional contentment, has closed the book & announced the hymn, son in law starts off, instant[ly] in full blast & hard at it as tho' determined to bear down all opposition, the hymn book & Psalm tunes in lengthy line on the table before him, his ponderous jaw "swings off" & the deep cavern of his mouth is opened. The sounds which are emitted tho' loud & full apparently due to the mouth owe much to the impending organ of expressive size & aquiline form which is the striking characteristic of our friend's face. His eyes are half closed, for all his nervous energy is required to the work [of] the vocal machinery below. A lock of his long straight hair has escaped from behind his ear & covers one eye, at the same time that it furnishes a background to the nose when viewed in profile. His head is cast up, his long digits trace the verse, & his extensive feet are withdrawn beneath the bench, in modest retirement & concentrated effort. When he has completed the task he wipes the perspiration from his forehead with a calico handkerchief & subsides into Egyptian solidity. He would be a "pendant" for Hogarth's old woman in the church scene in that artist's series of Industry & Idleness. For all this, Mr Petty-john is a man to 141 be respected, & I am indebted to him for his good intentions in rescuing me for one night from the horrors of *that* loft, altho' he scarcely bettered my condition by placing me in the interpreters office, where the accumulation of dust & stale tobacco smoke was in proportion to that gentleman's repugnance to permitting the "women folk" to "put things to rights."J6

6 The paragraph inclosed in brackets is written on three left-hand pages facing pages 40 to 42 of volume 2 of the diary. The point at which it should be inserted is indicated by Mayer.

A letter from Governor Ramsey introduced me to Mr Nath[anie]l McLane, the Indian agent at this post, a brother of Judge [John] McLane of Ohio.<sup>7</sup> He is a very kind & clever old gentlemen, hospitable & communicative, & his house, to which he has given me a general invitation, (endorsed by a *special* one to dinner, the *proper* style) is rendered specially



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agreeable by the presence of his pretty-black-eyed & *healthy* complexioned daughter who inherits many of her father's attractive qualities. After the deprivation of ladies' society for some time one discovers it's value as a portion of the sum of our 7 Nathaniel McLean was Indian agent for the Sioux at Fort Snelling from November, 1849, until the spring of 1853. He is listed in the manuscript schedules of the Fort Snelling census for 1850 as a printer, sixty-two years of age. His family included Mary McLean, aged twenty. He was known as a journalist, since in 1849 and 1850 he was one of the editors of the *Minnesota Chronicle and Register*, a newspaper published at St. Paul. His brother was Judge John McLean of the United States Supreme Court. Daniel S. B. Johnston, "Minnesota Journalism in the Territorial Period," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10:254. 142 habitual enjoyments,— & after gazing on nothing much superior to the Indian women, with their dark complexion & high cheek bones & disgusting figures it is certainly very *refreshing* to meet a young lady of refinement [ *sic* ], & a respectable degree of beauty. My situation therefore excuses this eulogium on the merits of Miss Mary McLane. As this fair one stood by me on the porch of her father's dwelling, having respectively ministered to our inner selves by partaking of the aforesaid dinner we descried at a distance on the prairie a long mass of dark colour creeping slowly across the prairie, & as they approached nearer & nearer we descried a detachment of dragoons under command of the redoubtable Lieutenant Gardner, having in charge seven Winnebagoes whom they had arrested in attempting to leave the country to which they had been removed by the Government & return to their former hunting grounds which they had sold to the U.S.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Lieutenant John W. T. Gardiner of Company D, First United States Dragoons, was stationed at Fort Snelling in 1848-49 and again from 1850 to 1852. The Winnebago, under a treaty negotiated in 1845, gave up their lands in Iowa. They were given a reservation at Long Prairie, in Todd County, Minnesota, and to this place many members of the tribe were removed between 1848 and 1850. The Winnebago, however, were dissatisfied with this reservation; they "were induced to maintain a constructive residence at Long Prairie because their annuities were paid there, but many individuals and small bands remained wanderers." It was probably one of these groups that Lieutenant Gardiner took to Fort Snelling during Mayer's visit. Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1.311-318; George W. Cullum,

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*Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*, 49 (Boston, 1891). 143

June 27. Spent the after part of the day with Mr & Mrs Steele & family [,] Mrs Whitehorn and Leut [Anderson D.] Nelson at Lake Calhoun[,], which is distant about seven miles from The fort.<sup>9</sup> It is approached by a road across a most beautiful prairie, slightly rolling in surface & skirted by "Coteaus" covered with forest. The eye can pierce an unobstructed distance of several miles across this beautiful *lawn*, for such it seems to be, & one is constantly expecting to see neat farm houses appearing at every turn. The whole country has the appearance of a cultivated grazing country, its rolling & hilly surface being varied with open prairies & wooded hills, the trees appearing in clumps & masses of a few acres, looking like the orchards of the Eastern states at a distance. This description is applicable to the whole valley of the Minnesotah river (St Peter's).<sup>10</sup> Lake Calhoun is about three miles long by two broad, & its clear glassy waters are confined in shores covered with pebbles of various colours. From this you rise 9 Lake Calhoun is now within the city limits of Minneapolis. In 1850 the Steeles had four children—three daughters, aged seven, four, and two, and a son, Franklin, aged one year. Mrs. M. Barney, probably Mrs. Steele's mother, and Rachel Steele also lived with the family. See manuscript schedules of the Fort Snelling census, 1850. Lieutenant Nelson was stationed at Fort Snelling from 1848 to 1849 and again from 1851 to 1853. Cullum, *Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy*, 104. <sup>10</sup> The Minnesota River was called the St. Peter's by early explorers and traders. The Indian name was officially given to the stream by act of Congress in 1852. The meaning of this name is discussed by Dr. Folwell in his *Minnesota*, 1:455-457. 144 to the undulating surface of a prairie one [on] one side, while wooded banks skirt the opposite shore. The lake abounds in fish & is a favorite pleasure ground for the offices of F[ort] S[nelling].

[ *Fairy Circles* —compass flower

Perfect circles of grass of more luxuriant growth than the surrounding & included prairie are among the phenomena of the West. They vary in diameter from six to one hundred feet, and increase annually, by the seed falling outwards. They have been named "Fairy

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circles,” & many hypotheses have been advanced as to their origin—some attribute them to the rolling of the buffalo. Others to the presence of a species of mushroom, which decaying, leaves the ground it occupied of richer quality than before.

Another wonder of the prairie is the compass-flower the leaves of which always grow from the stalk in a due north & south direction, provi[n]g an unerring guide to the lost wanderer on these pathless plains. It is known as the “rosin plant” & attains a height of three or four feet. It is not found north of Prairie du Chien.

Ant hills of large size are seen tenanted by their numerous & industrious inhabitants & surrounded by high walls of luxuriant grass. Snakes & roses, prairie flowers.]<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The section inclosed in brackets is written on two left-hand pages facing pages 43 and 44 of volume 2. The title and the last five words are written in pencil. 145

### IX Camping at Traverse des Sioux

June 29. Unexpectedly summoned I found myself on board the “Excelsior”<sup>1</sup> in company with Gov r Ramsey & Luke Lea Esq, the commissioners appointed to treat with the Dacotahs for a portion of their territory west of the Mississippi.<sup>2</sup> Hon H[enry] H. Sibley, Mr [Ashton S. H.] White of the Home department,<sup>3</sup> Dr Forster [ *Thomas Foster*, ] Secretary to the commission, Mr [W. C.] Henderson, <sup>1</sup> The “Excelsior” left St. Paul on the evening of June 28; it is likely that Mayer boarded the boat on the following morning at Fort Snelling, where Governor Ramsey went on board. Luke Lea arrived at St. Paul on the evening of June 27 on the “Excelsior.” Twenty-five dragoons, who had been promised to Ramsey as an escort, received such late notice that they could not get ready to leave and the boat departed without them. Goodhue, in *Pioneer*, July 3, 1851; Ramsey Diary, June 21, 28, 1851. <sup>2</sup> The membership of the treaty commission is discussed in some detail by Folwell in his *Minnesota*, 1:275-277. <sup>3</sup> White and Mayer seem to have been very friendly at Traverse des Sioux; Mayer mentions him frequently in the diary and the two men sketched portraits of one another. See Mayer's Sketchbooks, 42:31, 56, 62; 43:46. White was a clerk in the department of the interior at Washington. He accompanied Lea

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from Washington when the latter went west to act as commissioner at the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota. See *Register of all Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States, 1851*, 134 (Washington, 1851); Ramsey Diary, July 26, 1851. The sketches of White and Mayer are reproduced, *post*, p. 161, 162. 146 Mr [Richard] Chute & his lovely wife[,]<sup>4</sup> Mr [Hugh] Tyler, commissariat, Indian traders, & men of French, half breed & American blood<sup>5</sup> & a delegation of the principal men of the Kaposia, band, headed by their Chief were also on board, & the tent furniture, buffalo robes, blankets, rifles, mocassins &c indicated our destination to be the "Traverse des Sioux" a trading post & Indian village, about one hundred miles & ten miles from the mouth of the St Peters or Minnesota <sup>4</sup> Chute probably went to Traverse des Sioux to represent the interests of the trading firm of W. G. and G. W. Ewing of Fort Wayne, Indiana, with which he was connected, and which had numerous claims against the Sioux. He later settled permanently in Minneapolis. See W. H. C. Folsom, *Fifty Years in the Northwest*, 521 (St. Paul, 1888); Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:277n. Goodhue, in the *Pioneer* of July 10, refers to Mr. and Mrs. Chute's presence at Traverse des Sioux: "In our company are a gentleman and lady from Indiana;; and the lady is certainly the most resolute, enthusiastic admirer of frontier life that ever was seen. She is the most artless, fearless, confiding, enchanting woman that ever went anywhere; and her loveliness contrasts so favorably with the coarseness of those wild red women." <sup>5</sup> In addition to the treaty-makers specifically mentioned by Mayer, the following individuals were present at Traverse des Sioux: Alexis Bailly, L. J. Boury, F. Brown, Joseph R. Brown, Hercules L. Dousman, Alexander Faribault, William H. Forbes, James M. Goodhue, William Hartshorn, Alexander Huggins, Henry Jackson, Joseph Laframboise, William G. Le Duc, James H. Lockwood, a Mr. Lord, Kenneth McKenzie, Martin McLeod, Nathaniel McLean, Stephen R. Riggs, Franklin Steele, Wallace B. White, and Dr. Williamson. According to Goodhue, "There probably never before was an Indian treaty attended by so few persons and with so small expense." Goodhue, in *Pioneer* July 24, 1851; Hughes, in *Minnesota Historical Collection*, 10:111.

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### Camp Life, Traverse des Sioux

148 river,<sup>6</sup> where they [*the*] different bands of Sioux were invited to send their principal men to treat with the U.S. for the purchase of their lands.

<sup>6</sup> The distance from the mouth of the Minnesota River to Traverse des Sioux by water is only about seventy-five miles.

June 30<sup>th</sup> 1851, found us at Traverse de Sioux on a lovely prairie which rises gently from the river & so undulates until reaching the more distant & level prairies. The Indians as we had advanced into their country, and stopped at their villages assumed a wilder character, but did not seem so happy, well fed & comfortable as those who live near S t Paul & receive annuities from the U.S.<sup>7</sup> As we approached these village[s] the chief assembled his band on the hurricane deck and as a compliment to the village they were nearing in full chorus sung their brave song or chaunt, at the end of every stanza of which a whoop & yell was given. A speech from the chief followed, at the end of which all gave the usual approving "Hoah!" When nearing "traverse des Sioux" they all attired themselves in full costumes with eagle plumes & turkey-beards[,] deer tails & horse tails &c. that they might appear to their brethren in becoming <sup>7</sup> Those who had had more frontier experience than Mayer did not feel that annuities, which were received by the Sioux of eastern Minnesota under the terms of a treaty negotiated in 1837, served to improve the condition of the natives. Goodhue, in the *Pioneer* for July 17, notes the arrival of a group of Sisseton at Traverse des Sioux whom he describes as "better looking, cleaner and better dressed, than the lower bands; which perhaps by reason of their never having been paralyzed and stupified with annuities." For the provisions of the treaty of 1837, see Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:160. 149 plight. The provision, baggage &c were landed & an ox given into the hands of our butcher who divided it, surrounded by eager eyed Indians, evidently much in want of food. The tents were pitched, the U.S. ensign hoisted in front of the commissioner's marquee, & every preparation made for a fortnight's stay in camp.

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Little Crow being attired in state he fulfilled his promise to me by sitting for his portrait.<sup>8</sup> His headdress was peculiarly rich, a tiara or diadem of rich work rested on his forehead & a profusion of weasel tails fell from this to his back & shoulders. Two small buffalo horns emerged on either side from this mass of whiteness, & ribbons & a singular ornament of strings of buckskin tied in knots & colored gaily depended in numbers from his head to his shoulders & chest.

<sup>8</sup> The chief made this promise when Mayer visited him at Kaposia. See ante, p. 125. The portrait is reproduced ante, p. 119.

Our camp consisting of several tents and tepees commands a view of S t Peters' river, the prairie with its numerous lodges, the trading & mission houses and the surrounding country, & is tenanted by the commissioners & their officers & a motley collection of Frenchmen and half-breeds, traders, interpreters, voyageurs & trappers. The Kaposia band seem to be considered as especially our friends, & their tents are pitched near by, so that an intimate acquaintance exists between them & the members of the camp. <sup>150</sup> Their proximity affords an opportunity for constant observation of their habits & manners, & an agreeable intercourse with them confirms us in our ideas of their superiority in condition & manners to their neighbors.

The afternoon was occupied in witnessing a ball play performed by the women.<sup>9</sup> This is one of the most exciting & picturesque sights which can be witnessed, particularly when played by the men, their figures being more perfect, & the dresses more picturesque & beautiful than the women. Greater numbers engage in it, the stakes a[re] more valuable & the game consequently more exciting. The women's dress is their usual costume with the exception of the blanket, and some additional ornament disposed around the chest.

<sup>9</sup> The game described by Mayer was known as "la crosse." It was played in varying forms by Indian tribes throughout the eastern part of North America. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 127.

The Kaposia Indians are noted for their proficiency in this game, & their name has some reference to this quality. Kaposia—the light or lithe, active people. A challenge

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having been sent to the Indians resident here was accepted. The stake were arranged & they proceeded to attire for the contest by denuding themselves to their breech-cloth & adorning their heads in every variety of fanciful manner. The hair is new greased combed & plaited & then, with the aid of feathers, ribbons, streamers of red cloth, & bands of richly worked embroidery, arranged with care in the 151 great variety of manners which their imagination suggests. A collar or necklace & bracelets or armlets are put on. The breech cloth, worked sometimes in fanciful patterns by the squaws, is bound round the waist by a cincture. To this is generally attached some pendant ornament of feathers, furs & cloth, hanging from their belts & it contributes greatly to the *effect* of motion as they fly rather than run after the ball. Often a wing of some bird of large size hangs behind them, [or attached to the arm].<sup>10</sup> Often a string of sleigh bells give animation to the chase as it mingles with their cries & eager exclamations. Their toilet is completed by painting their faces with brilliant colours, and with a less valuable pigment made of a white or black clay they color their bodies. A favourite ornament is produced by smearing the palm of the hand & then patting the surface of the body so as to leave the impression of the hand. An Indian is thus often covered with these hands. This dress, or rather the want of it, displays their elegant figures to the greatest advantage, & on no occasion does the Indian appear in so suitable & tasteful a costume & one which is perfectly in harmony with the occupation in which they are to engage. The neat & airy head dress, brilliant in color & not subject to derangement from motion, but contributing to the grace of their swift movements, as their long hair, <sup>10</sup> The phrase inclosed in brackets is written in pencil in the original diary. 152 & pendant “tails” [“]wamekenunke” stream upon the wind, their feathers & crests tossing, their bodies turning with serpentine ease & deerlike swiftness, they run, vault & spring into the air, & course from one end to the other of the lawn-like prairie, like so many Mercuries, the brilliant colors of dress & paint, & the flashing armlets & diadems, & varied position leading the eye thro' an exciting & luxuriant chase.

Prepared for the game they sally forth to the appointed ground with loud whoops of defiance to their opponents, & headed by the chief, who seldom takes a part in the game,



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it being thought beneath his dignity except on extraordinary occasions, so far to relax the stateliness of his deportment. As they march along with stately & unencumbered step they seem so many monarchs of the soil they tread. Their blankets worn like regal robes, their heads with crowns seem clad. Their forms of classic purity & motion free as air. Arrived at the point where the game is to begin & where the judges, who are the old men & chiefs, are assembled, the various articles to be contended 153 for are arranged, if of convenient size they are strung upon a pole and erected on the ground. Larger articles as guns, saddles, horses &c, which are often gamed for, are merely placed at the stand. Bounds are the appointed beyond which each party endeavors to throw the ball, one party taking one boundary & the other the opposite, each strives to throw the ball beyond their own boundary & every time they succeed counts a game won. Every man is provided with a stick ("La crosse") made somewhat like a shepherds crook, so contrived as to retain the ball when it is caught or scooped up with the crooked portion. With these they "scoop up" the ball from the ground & catch it in the air & throw it often a great distance towards their respective boundaries.

At a signal the game begins by tossing the ball into the air, then commences the contest for victory, who shall throw the ball the oftenest beyond the boundary of their party. All active Indian catches it in his "crosse" as it descends, the opponent endeavours to prevent him from throwing it, but he flies like a deer 154 before his pursuers, his hair & "wamehenunke" streaming behind him, a bea[u]tiful race is the consequence, the possessor of the ball rapidly moving his "crosse" from right to left to retain the ball in its place, his opponent striving to the utmost to pass him & prevent him from attaining his purpose, but he artfully baffles his pursuers who are close upon his heels, suddenly he turns, dodges his rival, springs, like the "flying mercury" into the air, & the ball is hurled to an immense distance eagerly watched by the players. As it approaches the ground & its place of descent is apparent, the contending parties are instantly at the spot & then begins a strife to secure it again, a mass of writhing, pressing & flexible humanity, thrusting their "crosses" beneath each other's legs to try to procure the wished for prize, then,

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as one gets it & in trying to escape with it, it is knocked from his hand or he is tumbled on the ground his opponent falling often with him quickly they recover, and a thousand attitudes which display their bea[u]tifully lithe & elegant figures to the greatest advantage are produced in rapid suc[c]ession. One is at last successful, he shakes the crowd from him & runs as near to his bounds as he can without danger of losing his ball, he is at the extreme end of the prairie a half-mile distant from the place he left, again they contend and the ball is carried nearly to the opposite bounds, the chiefs & old men encouraging their men with a rapid stream of Dacotah fluency, the players contending to the 155

*Good Thunder in the Costume of a Ball-player*

156

*Indian Apollo Ball-player*

157 utmost, their suppressed words of eager rivalry indicating the vigour of their exertions, now in the eastern bound, now by your side, the crowd of spectators escaping from the stream of players by whom they are likely to be overwhelmed, from one end to the other of the immense p[r]airie, from your side to the distant horizon, they course with incredible swiftness.

One can have no idea of the physical powers of his race until he has witnessed this display, their rapidity seems that of animals of deerlike nature, their movements are so perfectly free & so unlike the motions of the white man. tho' surpassed by the Anglo Saxon in strength & powerful muscular developement they possess a symmetry of form & equality of developement, unknown to those who are engaged in one particular employment, developing one set of muscles at the expense of the others & losing *activity* in acquiring *power*. But one fault may be found with the figure of the Indian, the arms are often a little too effeminate & small from want of exercise. In other respects they realize our ideas of the classic purity of form displayed in Grecian art. Their straight spines, robust chest, flexible loins, finely rounded shoulders, straight & tapering limbs & small hands & feet are all ideal in character. No better "*life-school*" could be conceived, the

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figure no more clothed than decency requires, the little ornament there is contributing to the contrast of colour & forms, displaying the beautiful 158 curves & changes of the figure to advantage. The models *unconscious* of their positions, which vary from the repose of the fatigued victor to the fleet progress of the racer. The figures varying in character expression & costume. These games continue often for the whole day with slight intermissions for rest, and in the course of this time forty or fifty miles at least must be run, as they easily keep pace with a trotting horse. At the conclusion of the game the victorious party take possession of the stakes & divide them among the winners. No one is permitted to become angry or to take offence at any rough treatment he may receive.

The 1st July tested the efficiency of our tents, a violent storm arose & pelted furiously over our heads, attended by a sweeping blast which threatened to overthrow our tents & tear them to pieces. All hands stood to the tent-poles which quivered like aspen stems, & succeeded in holding them fast until the abatement of the storm. Thanks to the sailmaker & his patron S t Paul, they leaked not & like a ship which has weathered Cape horn, are *[our]* tents were considered proved as we are not likely to meet so severe a blow soon again.

This camp life is by no means a hardship as many might suppose, situated as we [are] in a bea[u]tifully picturesque & healthy country surrounded by agreeable & amusing associates, & hospitably entertained by "Uncle Sam". A mattress laid on the ground 159 & wrapped in a blanket[,] we breath[e] the pure air of the prairie & sleep as soundly as in the most luxuriant couch. The constant respiration of pure air, the suc[c]ession of novel scenes, & the variety of cheerful companions & amusing studies of character, contribute to engender good digestion & cheerfulness. The day is passed in visiting, reading[,] intercourse with the Indians, seeing the ball-plays, dance &c & at night, talks by the camp fire of frontier & Indian subjects, witnessing an Indian dance or listening to their wild, monotonous music, or tuning to a neighboring tent where are assembled the gentlemen of French descent the traders & voyageurs, we hear the Canadian boat songs, or the national airs of old France sung with spirit by melodious voices, while the occasional introduction

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of English songs, as “Sparkling & bright,” “Auld lang syne” & “Away with Melancholy” give variety to the evening's amusements. The voyageur songs had their origin probably in Normandie whence they were brought by the Acadians & Canadians & adapted to the movement of the paddle & oar.<sup>11</sup> The tunes are very light airy & graceful, full of beautiful expression suited to their purpose & The accompaniments of the voyageur as he paddles his canoes down the rivers of the north & west. The words are the ballad of the French

<sup>11</sup> “Voyageur Songs” is the title of a chapter in Nute, *The Voyageur*, 103-155. Mayer records the music of a voyager's song in his Sketchbooks, 43:49. 160 peasant sometimes poetical but the chief merit of the song is the music. Seated at table I heard French & Indian spoken almost exclusively & the co[u]ntenances of foreign appearance, French, Indian and half breed, beguile me into a belief of being in some foreign land. May it not be called foreign, twenty five hundred miles from home & in an Indian country.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Mayer exaggerates somewhat the distance between Baltimore and Traverse des Sioux. Actually he was about eighteen hundred miles from the former place.

A few feet from the voyageur singers are the “sauvages” whose music presents a contrast to their more civilized neighbors. The instrument most popular with the Indian is a drum made by stretching a piece of hide over the top of a keg, or similar to a tambourine. The music is a monotonous measure suited to the motions of the dance, two or three notes perpetually repeated, varying little in measure. Seated at the door of the lodge while their companions & voyageurs are grouped around a [sic] they commence their drumming & after a few moments one of their number issues from the tent attired somewhat in the costume used in the ball-play & with a war club tomahawk or other war like instrument in his hand. With grunts & wild cries he places himself in an attitude which resembles more a wild animal about to spring on its prey than anything I can recall, & dances, or rather performs a succession of jumps, stamps & hops, on both feet or on one, thrusting

*A Sketch of Mayer by Ashton White*

*Colonel Henderson Ashton White*

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163 his head out & in & grimacing in a wild & malicious manner, evidently giving great delight to his friends & exercise to himself. This is one of their less important dances, the Winnebago dance[,] but it has the character of all of them.

A War dance was celebrated last night by "Little Crow" & his braves. None were admitted but those who had taken a scalp & signalized himself by his valour. Each carried his favourite weapon a war-club, tomahawk or lance & danced, in the bear-style, elevated their weapons above their heads & accompanying the "tam-tam" of the drums with a war song. At the conclusion of each stanza, if I may so speak, one of them stepped into the ring formed by his companions & related in a bravado manner some of his most daring exploits,<sup>13</sup> at the conclusion of the recital a "hoah!" from all was the response & the dance & song succeeded for a few minutes when another stood up & endeavour[ed] to exceed his predecessor in the extravagance of his story. This is the only occasion on which the Indians are permitted to "bragg" & vaunt their own courage & acts. They avail themselves of the privilege however & use to the fullest extent this safety-valve for their vanity. This [is] a sagacious institution of the savage & might <sup>13</sup> The following notation in pencil occurs at this point: "Divan—Arab resemblances to the Indians." The main body of the manuscript is here written upside-down on left-hand pages, but this notation is rightside-up at the head of a page. It faces page 62 of volume 2. <sup>164</sup> be introduced with great profit in some civilized communities Instead of being annoyed as one often is by a dripping stream of self-conciet [ *sic* ] it might be retained by its possessor until an appointed period when it might be discharged in a torrent—leaving him at other times as the Indian is, perfectly silent on the subject of his great actions. [A Bragging festival annually, or quarterly, to suit the circumstances of the various cases is therefore suggested.]<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The sentence inclosed in brackets is crossed out in the original diary.

Friday morning last [ *July 4* ], as we rose we wer[e] star[t]led by a horseman riding into camp & announcing, "Hopkin's is drowned"! But the night before the gentle Missionary had been among us & attracted all by his pleasant manners.<sup>15</sup> We could not realize the news. He had gone early that morning to bathe in the river, his usual custom. He did not

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meet his family at breakfast & soon his clothes were found on the bank. Every effort was made to discover, the body by the assembled whitemen & Indians, but without avail. A net was finally stretched across the channell in hopes that it might arrest it in its downwards course should it float. Three days had 15 This tragedy occurred on the morning of July 4. As a mark of respect for the dead missionary, the “grand celebration” planned for the day was cancelled. Robert Hopkins had been connected with the Traverse des Sioux mission station since 1843; he was ordained in 1848. Stephen R. Riggs, “The Dakota Mission,” in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, S:121, 123; Indian Office, *Reports*, 1851, p. 171; Goodhue, in *Pioneer*, July 10, 1851. 165 passed and a terrible storm arose, peal after peal of thunder called the dead man from his grave & he arose, a ghastly object covered with the mire & filth of the treacherous stream, his hands clenched in agony & his limbs stiffened in death yet tranquil was his face, as tho' a prayer had passed them with his breath. A noble looking Indian & a voyageur raised him from the water still turbid with the passing storm, laved him & swathed him in linen & as the canoe glided with its ghastly load towards the former desolate home of the window it was followed by a long line of silent spectators, Indians, French & Americans. It stopped at the point where he was last seen & in the faces of the Sioux quivering lips & moistened eyes were seen tho' Indian stoicism opposed their utterance. An aged woman bent beneath a century stood before the body. She burst forth into a flood of grief as she grasped her robe convulsively & bent herself in agony. Oh, my son! my son! she exclaimed he had pity on me, he fed me, he clothed me, & when I was sick he nursed me. This was all I could gather, for the sobs smothered her words. She retired weeping, & then returned & the tears seemed dry the fountain was exhausted, she had lost a friend. The Indian is accused of want of feeling yet this woman was an Indian, [& there were others near her in silent grief.]<sup>16</sup> The rude coffin was soon prepared, he widow took a 16 The passage inclosed in brackets is written in pencil in the original diary. 166 last look, her grief was too deep for tears, silent, chill. Then the hammer & the nails the unostentatious procession to the grave, the hymn, a prayer, the clods returned upon the coffin lid &—<sup>17</sup>

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17 Hopkins' body was found on July 7. An account of this event, similar to that given by Mayer, and of the funeral of the missionary is presented by Goodhue in the *Pioneer*, July 17, 1851. Volume 2 of Mayer's diary is concluded at this point. 167

### X Half-breeds and Indians

Strolling thro' the village of Karmeahton<sup>1</sup> in company with that fine specimen of a French gentleman Mr [Alexis] Bailly our camp master, we stopped before the farthest lodge.<sup>2</sup> "This is the lodge of Rda-mah-nee or the 'walking rattler' & here lives Winuna or Nancy M c Lure the natural daughter of an officer of our army & an Indian woman. We'll go in." On a mattress covered by a nest quilt sat 1 Mayer seems to have some doubts about the name of the Indian village at Traverse des Sioux. In the margin of a drawing of Nancy McClure he first spelled the name "Karmeahton," but he crossed this out and substituted "Kaghmeatowar." He translated this name as "the village in the corner." Sketchbooks, 41:102. 2 Bailly was a prominent Minnesota fur-trader of French and Indian blood. His trading post and home were located at Wabasha. There seems to be some question regarding his position at Traverse des Sioux. Mayer here refers to him as "camp master," and he speaks of Tyler as "commissariat" ( *ante*, p. 146). According to Dr. Folwell, however, Bailly was "commissary of the commission" that negotiated the treaty. Goodhue speaks of Bailly as "assistant commissary" and "one of the most useful and active camp men, that ever was." Upham and Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*, 28; Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1:279; *Pioneer*, July 17, 1851. 168 Winuna, the most beautiful of the Indian women I have yet seen.<sup>3</sup> She is sixteen & the woman has scarcely displaced the child[,] girl [in her face and figure]<sup>4</sup> She possesses Indian features softened into the more delicate contour of the Caucasian & her figure is tall, slender & gracefully girlish. Her eyes are dark & deep, a sweet smile of innocence plays on her ruby lips, & silky hair of glossy blackness falls to her dropping shoulders. She received us with a smile & a modest inclination of her head. She understands English, for the departed missionary had been her instructor, but excessive modesty prevents her essaying to speak, her only answers being the innocent smile downcast eyes & nod of affirmation or denial. She has been visited by most of our camp,



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the rarity of her beauty being the attraction, & the purchase of mocassins the ostensible object.

3 Nancy McClure lived with her grandmother in the Sisseton Sioux village at Traverse des Sioux, of which Red Iron, or Mazasha, was the chief. Her father, Lieutenant James McClure, was stationed at Fort Snelling from 1823 to 1837. In the latter year he was transferred to Florida, where he died in 1838. Nancy's Sioux name was Winona, which "means the first-born female child." "The Story of Nancy McClure," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 6:439, 440, 445; Hughes and Brown, *Old Traverse des Sioux*, 3. 4 The words inclosed in brackets are crossed out in the original.

She has been courted for a year past in person & by proxy by David Ferebeaux [ *Faribault* ] a young Indian trader of half breed descent & the ceremony of marriage was yesterday performed at our camp,<sup>5</sup> 5 The wedding took place on July 11. The groom was the son of Jean Baptiste Faribault, a prominent Minnesota fur-trader. The bride relates that she "wore a pretty white bridal dress, white slippers and all the rest of the toilet," and that "there was a wedding dinner too, and somebody furnished wines and champagne for it, and I was toasted and drunk to, over and over again." Nancy McClure, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 6:446, 4447; Goodhue, in *Pioneer*, July 17, 1851.

*Nancy McClure*

### *The Wedding of Nancy McClure and David Faribault*

171 [two horses were given for the bride.]<sup>6</sup> At the commissioner's marquee were assembled the bride & groom & his relatives, the Governor & the commissioner, & suite the voyageur half-breeds & canadian[s] & the Indians. Mr. Alexis Bailly the Magistrate [ *sic* ] present read the service of the Episcopal church the different personages grouped around forming a picturesque & novel scene.<sup>7</sup> The bride congratulated, the marriage was announce[d] by a salute of champagne corks, the report of which soon summoned the camp to hilarious harmony, which flowed on thro' a hearty dinner & the subsequent toasts & broke like the surf as the company dispersed singing simultaneously by individual &

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collective efforts “Sparkling & bright” “Auld lang syne,” & “Vive le Compagnie”. A speech from the commissioner was translate[d] into Sioux & delivered to the Indians.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The sentence inclosed in brackets is written in pencil in the original diary. <sup>7</sup> According to Goodhue, Bailly was a “Justice of the Peace in and for this county.” See *Pioneer*, July 17, 1851. It is interesting to note that Bailly's wife was a sister of David Faribault. <sup>8</sup> Lea was the speech-maker. The text of his talk is given by Goodhue in the *Pioneer* for July 17, 1851.

As we retu[r]ned from dinner a long train of Sioux men & women, on horseback & on foot, arrayed in 172 their best, were seen wending towards the camp. The principal men formed a circle in front of the marquee entertained the commissioners with a dance. We were soon called from this, however by the announcement of a “Virgin's feast”. It is customary among the Sioux, when the character of any young unmarried girl is impeached for her to give a feast to which she invites all who profess virginity whether male or female. A most solemn oath is taken as to the truth of their profession & any one who knows aught to the contrary is at liberty to drag the perjured person from the ring to be disgraced & hooted at by the tribe. A circle was formed one half of which was occupied by young girls, the other by youths & young men. Proclamation having been made by the crier that all who were virgins might join the ring, the guests took their places on the ground having previously touch'd a stone [which was painted red & a arrow stuck into the ground near it, the latter the emblem of piercing of conscience,]<sup>9</sup> which were placed together in the centre of the ring, that being the form of the oath, & signifying their acceptance of the terms of the invitations. All assembled, the crier proceeded to divide the food consisting of cakes of flour & [tea]<sup>10</sup> which were served round to the encir[c]led guests a portion having been <sup>9</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is written in pencil in the original diary. <sup>10</sup> The word “coffee” is crossed out in the original diary; it is replaced by the word inclosed in brackets written in pencil. 173 sent to the old persons first. Scarcely had they begun to eat & a morsel was about to enter the mouth of one who had been seated with downcast head enveloped in her blanket, when a young man pushed thro' the crowd siezed her rudely by the arm & dragged her from the ring followed by the hoots & sneers of the spectators. She

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arose, wrapped herself in her blanket & concealed herself behind a group of her relatives, the picture of dejection & chagrin. The feast was concluded with the consumption of the food, no similar event occurring except one in which I figured & unintentionally incurred the deprecation of one of the traders, a married man, who as a joke, having been a participater in the wedding festivities, seated himself in the ring. The bystanders suggested that some one should "pull him" out & I accepted the office. He was much offended & the Indians have laughed heartily at him. As I intended no harm, he must take the will for the deed. The friends of the girl who had been disgraced declare her innocence. The legend of the maiden's rock is connected with this custom. A rejected lover maliciously dragged Wenuna a Sioux maiden from the virgin feast. The false accusation stung her to despair & she threw herself from the rock.<sup>11</sup> [Many instances are cited where malice has induced unsuccessful lovers or seducers <sup>11</sup> Maiden Rock is a prominent landmark on the east bank of Lake Pepin. The legend connected with this spot tells of Winona, a Sioux maiden whose parents tried to force her to marry a man of their choosing when she loved another. Rather than obey, she threw herself from the rock into the waters below. The legend is related by Stephen H. Long in his narrative of a "Voyage in a Six-Oared Skiff to the Falls of Saint Anthony in 1817," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 2:24-26. 174 to drag innocent girls from the feast. Some have had the boldness to date their accusers to the proof & to demand the evidence of the truth of the accusation & thus thwarted their enemies.]<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is written upside-down on a left-hand page facing page 8 of diary A.

[An Indian has just arrived who announces that two Dacotahs have been waylaid by four Chippeways & scalped within two miles of S t Pauls. It is reported that they proceeded to the house of a trader as they returned to their country & endeavoured to rob him, but he shot one & wound[ed] the others & they retreated. Again an advanced courier of the Siseton Sioux reports that two men, a woman & two children who were travelling northward have been murdered by night & scalped by the Chippeways.]<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The paragraph inclosed in brackets is written on two pages facing and following page 8 diary A. The last sentence is written in pencil. Examples of Sioux-Chippewa conflict

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are common in the pioneer history of Minnesota. The Sioux, living in the southern part of the territory, and the Chippewa of the north were hereditary enemies. A brief account of their perpetual warfare, by Willoughby M. Babcock, is published under the title "Sioux versus Chippewa," in *Minnesota History*, 6:41-45 (March, 1925). On July 5, 1851, a report reached Traverse des Sioux "that two Sioux had been lately killed by a party of Chippewas," according to a news item in the *Pioneer* July 17.

This is an unusually rainy season & we are almost daily visited by storms of wind & rain, the severest came at midnight and broke our dreams by its terrific

*Sibley's Tent at Traverse des Sioux* Sibley is at the right, Henderson at the left.

*James M. Goodhue at Traverse des Sioux*

177 howl. For two hours the lightning flashed contin[u]ously, illum[i]nating all things as by an ill-omened meteor, & the roar of the accompanying thunder the torrents of descending rain & the wind driving like [a] hurricane follow as the herald of its deeds. The accumulated streams descended from the hills & filled in its impet[u]ous force a ravine that was near us adding its voice to the chorus of contending sounds. The stout canvass of our tents seemed every moment about to be rent into ribbons, the tent poles trembled & the cords threatened to part at every blast. The fly had already given away & flapped as tho' it were a "thunder bird" demanding our destruction. The storm seemed spent & as it paused for an instant as tho' preparing for a redoubled attack, the profoundest darkness intervened & we heard [ sic ] the calls of our neighbors enquiring for our safety & informing us of their overthrow. They were the only ones who had suffered this misfortune, the other tents & all the teepees stood firm. All concurred in declaring, in poetic language that they'd "met with many a breeze before but never such a blow" The "oldest inhabitant" who happened to be present remembered one, his reserve, on such occasions, which had surpassed it. The storm abated & during the hours which passed till daylight jokes travelled from tent to tent thro' the pitchy darkness & the scien[t]ific gentlemen were enabled to make many useful hygrometrical observations, such as the cubical contents of 178 hats, the absorbing powers of pantaloons & blankets & eff[ic]acy of wet sheets & hydropathic

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treatment. A musical gentleman suggested “A wet sheet & a flowing sea” and another dreamingly remarked that his feet were in the grand canal. A filtering apparatus seemed suspended above my head & a simalar one watered my knees while my blanket was gently moistended [ sic ] by the spray of the rival drippings. At daylight my clothes were “bien humide”! & my hat, ‘twas water proof, & held a quart. [“]It's an ill wind blows no one good” is a good proverb—so I used the impromptu cascade from the prarie as a shower bath & dried my clothes by the morning sun & exercise.

We had thought that in this storm Eolus had spent his force but it has proved otherwise for scarce a day has passed without a gust & we are heartily tired of its continuance. The Indians seem the same & for the purpose of appeasing the thunder bird or destroying his influence, a medicine man of the Siseton band, yesterday gave a dance for that purpose.<sup>14</sup> An arbour was constructed of branches of trees large enough for a man to sit in & a vessel of water, a stone painted red & a crooked stick on which to rest his pipe <sup>14</sup> Opposite this statement, at the foot of a left-hand page facing page 5 of diary B, Mayer wrote in pencil “The Thunder is the most important of the Dacotah gods.” Goodhue calls this dance the “Round dance.” He describes it in the *Pioneer* of July 17, 1851. Mayer's sketch of the dance is reproduced *post*, p. 181; an engraving based on the sketch, but lacking its life and action, is published in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, 6:352. 179 were placed at the door & at the foot of a tall sapling, to the top-most branches of which a figure of the thunder bird was suspended. It was cut in thin bark & rudely represented the form of a large bird. At the extremity of a radius of about fifteen feet from this centre, a hedge made of boughs similar to those of the arbor & about four feet high enclosed the sacred ground. Four arches of branches span[n]ed the entrances to the circle & four saplings with thunder birds at their summits similar to the centre one but smaller were erected at the side of each gate. The arrangement was quite picturesque & resembled the arbors & hedges of an ornamental garden walk.

The ceremonies commenced by the medicine man issuing from his lodge near by his face painted black & long grass interwoven with his hair, with rattle & flute, & esconcing

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himself in the sanctum-sanctorum. He immediately began his song and tat-too-ing on the drum similar to the usual Indian dance music, excepting an occasional variation with a whistle. A number of men attired in their best ran into the ring & danced in a circle around him keeping time with their feet to the music, & passing around him in a continuous procession, the faces expressing the liveliest animation. In a short time the music ceased & they retired with a whoop to recruit for another effort. Soon the music began again the dancers entered reenforced by additional performers, as they danced or jumped around, the horseman collected at 180 the next "set" lent their aid to the performances. As the invigorating music of the medicine continued more joined in until the area was nearly filled with a moving mass of men boys & women, Jumping around yelling & raising their weapons above the nodding plumes & headdresses. The horsemen then galloped at full speed around the exterior of the hedge their spirited horses flowing hair & agitated drapery & plumes forming a most exciting & beautiful equestrian spectacle. They realize the figures carved by the hand of Phidias on the freize of the Parthenon to represent the annual festival of the Greeks in honor of Minerva. The small size, yet spirited & "blooded" character of the horses as they pranced & curveted in wild freedom around the circle their swelling necks & expanded nostril, the wild eye peering beneath a shaggy fore-lock, their long sweeping tails & mains & their tapering limbs & small unshod feet, suggest at once the live-like procession of the Elgin marbles —& prove the truth of the artist's observations & study of nature.

The stirrupless riders some with their blankets strapped around them their hair streaming from their crests of nodding eagle plumes at once recall the heroes of the parthenon clad in Grecian cloak & helmn. Nor does the Indian in this respect alone recall the classic models of antiquity, some have features strictly classic & their finely turned limbs & perfectly developed chests reminds us at once of the

*The Thunder or Round Dance*

*Camp and Grave-yard, Traverse des Sioux*

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183 ancient marbles of the museums of Art. There are other points of resemblance, as in their mythology where the God of thunder plays a conspicuous part. These are but instances of similarity produced by parralell stages of progress & habits of life—for at times when clad in long capotes & blankets, mounted with short stirrups & carrying a tall gun, or seated by their tent doors, they seem tableaux vivants of the Arabs of Vernet.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Emile J.H. Vernet was a French painter of military subjects. There are two notations in pencil on a left-hand page facing the preceding passage. The first reads: "Hoo-hah-a-tah, many limbs or Briarcus is an Indian name"; the second, which is almost exactly opposite the end of the paragraph, consists of the single word "Asiatic."

[The Indian horse is a descendant of the Andalusians who have escaped from their mexican owners & formed large herds in the vast plains of the wests. They are their [ sic ] of the average size tho less powerful than the domesticated animal & apt to be motled in colours. Their name & tails are long & sweeping & in speed & activity they equal the civilized animal. Those in possession of the Sioux have been passed from tribe to tribe, stolen by their neighbors & have thus travelled northward. They are smaller than the Southern stock.]<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The paragraph inclosed in brackets is written in pencil on a left-hand page facing page 2 of diary C. Horses were introduced into the New World by the Spanish invaders of Mexico. Stray and escaped animals formed wild herds; the horses multiplied rapidly on the plains of the Southwest, and gradually they spread northward. They were also introduced into the Mississippi Valley by explorers and by Indians who stole them from southern tribes. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 1:569.

As the music & motion grew faster & furious the 184 horsemen retired & marksmen stood with guns at each gate, & at a given [signal] discharged them at the centre thunder bird who immediately fell to the ground, when the actors retired & the dance was done. As to the eff[ic]acy of this festival time will show, but tho' the thunder seemed appeased, the wind fully compensated it's loss last night, my unfortunate hat was found outside my tent this morning thoroughly immersed—the rim having formed a gutter which collected the water & isolated the crown.



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13th July. As we returned from church at the mission where doctor Williamson has preached,<sup>17</sup> a large crowd of Indians had collected in view of a puppet which was intended to represent an enemy & around which an Indian was imitating the manoeuvres of an attack showing the manner of a particular feat of the performer. A party of chiefs seated by proclaimed the lists open, when a brave with a gun cautiously approached & placed his blanket on a short stick to represent an ambush, & hid himself behind it, presently he hears an enemy, he cautiously looks out, then stealthily raises his gun & fires, he hides, again, fires, he is discovered, retreats almost on hands 17 Goodhue reports that the services of July 13 were held in the "little mission school house, which the writer, with W.B. White is allowed to use for a bed room during the treaty." He relates that "Dr. Williamsom gave us a very interesting biography of the lamented Mr. Hopkins." *Pioneer*, July 17, 1851. 185 & feet, he is loading & about to shoot, he is seen & flies again, fires as he runs hides himself & fires again, he is the victor he rushes out tramples the enemy to the ground scalps him & retires with the applause of the spectators.

July 14. Mr. Chute, Mr. Henderson[,] Mr. Boury & myself left the camp in [search] of a lake said to exist on the opposite side of the river Minnesota about five miles distant. With one exception, greenhorns at the paddle it was our primary lesson in voyaging. Our progress being up stream & in position to a strong current our arms were fully employed, what with poling, paddling & portaging, wading thro' sloughs & pushing the canoe thro the tangled bushes & grapevines, for we passed thro forests which are usually ten feet above the river bank, we had a very fair example of voyaging by the time we arrived at the foot of the opposite bluffs. Concealing our canoe in the "cat tails" which bordered our landing to prevent its appropriation by some stray Indian, we proceeded to explore the surrounding country in search of this much-talked-of lake. What at a distance appeared a beautiful hill side clothed with a green sward proved a steep ascent covered with thick grass & brambles near as high as our heads. Attaining the summit, the extensive view repaid our toil.

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On the opposite side of the river extends an undulating prairie bounding the horizon & about three miles in length. At the farthest extremity a white 186 dot & a few conical elevations indicated the position of our camp. The river enlarged to ten times its natural size & covering meadows & skirts of timber usually high above its banks, extended to the foot of the

### Sisseton Lodges at Traverse des Sioux

hills on the opposite side. These are abrupt & high & their surface is variagated with timber & open spaces, clear as tho' prepared for the reception of a herd of cattle or a wheat crop. These, extended as far as the eye can reach, present a pleasing contrast to the opposite shore. Anon we shall see neat farmhouses & villas perched upon the commanding eminences where now the eagle soars & the buzzard flapps his murky wing. Nature seems to have prepared this land for the husbandman, cleared open fields for his grain & cattle, & scattered forests for his buildings fire-wood & game & for his food & recreation provided lakes well stocked with fish—while the air seems pregnant with health & vigour.

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From this beautiful prospect we turned to the woods & scrambled through underbrush & thickets, over logs & through swamps in hopes that we soon might find the crystals sheet we had imagined, but the only reward we received was the sight of a small lake surrounded by a swamp which we were obliged to wade, tormented by the hosts of musq[u]itos gnats & flies who guards this sylvan retreat. The heat was also excessive, & as we pushed our tortuous way towards our canoe again we were glad enough to prostrate ourselves on the wet earth & with hands & mouth, strive to imbibe a few mouthfuls from a delic[i]ous spring which we discovered in a thickly wooded ravine. The water was clear as crystal & cold & [ as ] ice but the musqu[i]tos which seem to have congregated at our approach, permitted us not to enjoy this slight luxury in quiet but compelled us to push on to the river we found our canoe safe. We reach'd the camp in

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safety, the wind & current greatly assisting our progress. Sunburnt faces & arms, empty stomachs & wet extremities, (for our canoe afforded a "sitz["] bath to its occupants,) & our wearied limbs bore evidence of our toil in discovering a lake which our companions now informed us *did not exist*, but having discovered one which they knew not of, the hoaxers were hoaxed & the laugh was mutual.<sup>18</sup>

18 Goodhue, in the *Pioneer* for July 24, gives the following account of the search for the nonexistent lake: "Several young men of our camp started off in the morning, across the river, to see Cedar Lake, a handsome sheet, in the midst of a dark forest, distant, it is said, about five or six or seven, or it may be eight miles, or perhaps leagues, from the Traverse. They returned without seeing Cedar Lake, not knowing where to look for it but thinking, neverthelss, that they could come so near it, that the artist in their company, who draws every thing, from the cork of a porter bottle to a queer conclusion, would be able to *draw* it, but he did not. The fact is, like a Mackinaw boat, he draws but very little water; but when it comes to drawing rations, we or dry, our painter is ' *thar!* '" 188

As yesterday the Indians performed a sham-fight on foot, to day a somewhat similar manuevre, was executed on horse-back. All the upper band of Sissetons, mounted their horses, being in full dress with the exception of their heads, which were nearly concealed by branches which they carried in their hands, & with which they were bedecked in different ways, mostly, sashwise. They thus presented much the appeared accorded to McDuffs army when "Birnam wood did come to Dunsinane". This long cavalcade then proceeded to the various encampments discharging their guns as they passed, which were quickly answered by the others as the cavalry swept swiftly by, allowing no time for a ceremony which is sometimes practised, but which on this occasion was not agreeable to the horsemen. If an Indian of the encampment succeeds in including a horseman to dismount & engage in a sham fight & the footman performing the manuevre of scalping is successful, his opponent presents him his horse. The custom is a complimentary one usual with friendly tribes or bands of the same tribe. Having passed the encampments 189 of the different bands the[y] drew up before the commissioner's tents where they passed in review & were presented with a gift of tobacco & biscuit which was divided among them by their chief men. As they sped homeward in scattering parties, racing their horses over

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the prairie, up & down its gentle undulations, at one moment almost lost to view & the next emerging in distinct profile on the horizon, then sweeping off into the distance until lost among their teepees, they presented objects of picturesque interest, the vast extent of green prairie varied by their long shadows projected by the setting sun.

No situation is so well adapted for the view of a fine sunset as one of these prairies, with its distinct & unobstructed horizon. The large & “quiet” mass of green sward serving as a foil to display the brilliant & various colours of the sunset to great advantage. The great clearness of the atmosphere adds very much to the beauty of the scene [*scene*], the delicate gradations of color & effect are distinctly visible.<sup>19</sup>

19 Mayer drew a line through all but the first sentence of this paragraph. 190

### **XI Sioux Gods and Men**

The Dacotah have a god whom they call Ha-o-kah, or the contrary god.<sup>1</sup> They suppose him to be a little old man with a short body & very long legs, who goes naked during the winter, suffering intensely from heat, while in summer he is warmly clothed to exclude the cold by which he is chilled. Any one under his influence acts in direct opposition to the usual deportment of sane persons. If desired to go, he stays, to sleep he keeps awake, to laugh he cries, he speaks by contraries. One under his influence the other day, said, “how dry the river is there is no water in the channel. I never saw it so low.” The river was then higher than it has been for years. Two brothers under his influence entered 1 The word “Ha-o-kah” is written in pencil, and apparently is not in Mayer’s handwriting. “The nature of the Heyoka is not simply supernatural, it is the opposite of nature,” writes Gideon H. Pond in an account of “Dakota Gods,” in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 2: 232. According to this writer the Sioux gods included four varieties of Heyoka. “They feel perfect assurance when beset with dangers, and quake terror when safe. With them falsehood and truth are reversed; good is their evil and evil their good.” <sup>191</sup> the camp attired very much after the manner of heralds with short buffalo-hide cloaks painted with different devices, as birds, stars, diamond patterns &c, & a long string of feathers pendant from their heads. They

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walked or danced in a polka-like step arm in arm their bow & arrows in one hand & in the other they carried rattles which kept time to a perpetual song or chaunt which they sang. Dancing thro' the teepees they were told *not* to go to the Governor's Camp, when they immediately turned round & went there[,] a result which was desired by the commissioners who wished to see them. A heavy shower did not seem to disconcert them in the least. [In entering a house they *backed* in & out.]<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The sentence inclosed in brackets is written in pencil on a lefthand page facing page 2 of diary E. Some sketches of the "Haokah dancers" appear in Mayer's Sketchbooks, 42:83, 84.

The Dacotah religion is Pantheistic.<sup>3</sup> They indue every object with a spiritual existence or mysterious power. They pray to every object in nature which they wish to appease or supplicate, if asked what they pray chiefly too, they say to *stones*, for there are more of them almost any other object they know. [Every person generally selecting some particular object which is his "patron saint" as it were—or "medicine". If possible he procures the object & having preserved it in an ornamental bag, <sup>3</sup> A general account of the "religion and worship" of the Sioux is presented by Pond, in *Minnesota Historical Collection*, 12: 401-409. 192 pouch, or vessell, he keeps it with care near him, & when he dies it is buried with him.]<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The passage inclosed in brackets is written at the foot of a lefthand page facing page 2 of diary E.

Beside these they have several invisible deities who possess great power. These are the Spirit of water, whom [sic] they say, is a "big fish" or "sea monster", the spirit of lightning & who is a man, with small body long arms & large wings & clothed in red who flies thro the air & his rapid motion & bright garments causes the appearance of lightning.

[Neptune

"Oonc-ta-hee," i.e, one who is dreadful—he is supposed to be a sea-monster of dreadful appearance Wahkahende—[ *blank in MS.* ] The thunder which is a favorite mystery is said

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to be caused by one or some say, two great-birds, called "Wahkeah" whose flapping or voice as they fly thro' the air causes the sound of the thunder.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> According to Gideon Pond, the Sioux gods included two "Onktehi," which in external form resembled huge oxen. "The dwelling place of the male is in the water, and the spirit of the female animates the earth." It is therefore the male that Mayer described as the Neptune of the Sioux. The Indians believed that the missionary Hopkins was drowned because he had offended this god. Pond asserts that the Dakota mythology included four "Wakinyan" or flyers—great birds that cause the thunder. *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 2: 219-222, 228.

"Some think these deities to be solitary, others that there are races of them. The Thunder birds & the spirit of the water, who is the "medicine god" & burrows under ground are always at war—and the lighting 193 striking to the earth is when the air-deity strikes the earth & water monster. The bones of the mammoth which are sometimes found on the praries, they think are the conquered deities' remains & preserve them a[s] "Wahkon".<sup>6</sup> The Oonctahee has a long tail with which he sometimes catches the thunder birds & drags them to the ground. Their contentions cause the storms.]<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The Sioux "had seen bones of the mammoth, pieces of which they had in their possession," according to Samuel Pond. They thought that these were the bones of a huge buffalo or ox, and since it exceeded other animals in size, it was "adopted as their chief god." *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 12:403. <sup>7</sup> The caption and the two paragraph inclosed in brackets are written on a left-hand page facing page 3 of diary E. The first word, or heading, and the second paragraph are written in pencil.

Then there is Withokah the "fool-maker" or the god who makes the game foolish that the Dacotah may the more easily capture them. He is frequent[ly] prayed to. The sun & moon are also deities & there is a spirit of the earth & fire & the four winds. The god of war is however chiefly worshipped. The idea of the "great-spirit" is probably derived from the whites.

[Pallas

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We-an-no-pa-pee, (two women,) preside over ornamental work &c & one skilful in such things has dreamed of or is inspired by Weannopapee. Tah-koo-shka-shka-shka (he who stirs) animates their weapons & is the god of motion. His disposition is peevish & he is easily displeased—he is therefore 194 treated with peculiar reverence. Their armor-feast is made to this god and are frequent. He also resides in boulders, & presides at the hot bath. The medicine men in some instances are under his influence.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Most of the Sioux gods mentioned by Mayer are described also by Pond, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 2: 219-255.

Their form of prayer is destitute of the usual appearance of reverence. As they proceed to the hunt, anything which is considered by them as a deity is offered the pipe & trinket, feather or piece of tobacco or food is placed before it to secure it's good will & assistance. Their game is often a deity & if the opportunity permits, a prayer the burthen of which is that it may permit itself to be killed, is pronounced, the pipe & some sacrifice is offered to it & then it is slain. They speak of & address their gods as familia[r] acquaintances & look upon [them] rather as beings to be appeased than beloved.

After death they suppose their spirits to be rewarded or punished according to their behaviour in this world. After the soul leaves the body it journeys over, (some say an iron) road far to the south at last it reaches a wide lake or river, where the only crossing is by a long pole laid across it at the apposite end of which a goddess stands. The Sioux tattoo their bodies with various figures & these are their passports to the region of happiness beyond the river.<sup>9</sup> If they have been good men & can show <sup>9</sup> Mayer seems to have confused the use of paint by the Sioux with the practice of tattooing, which was unknown by this tribe. It is unlikely that any of the motifs with which they decorated their bodies were looked upon as “passports to the region of happiness.” Miss Frances Densmore to the editor, October 9, 1931. 195 these marks, they are permitted to pass. If not the goddess shakes the poles & they fall into the water. Little children who have not been tattooed show the veins on their hands & feet. Beyond the river are fine hunting grounds & the



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*perfection* of all the pleasures which they enjoyed in this life. They suppose this region to be some place on Earth, far to the South. The milky-way is called the road of spirits.]<sup>10</sup>

10 The caption and the three paragraphs inclosed in brackets are written in pencil on three left-hand pages facing pages 4, 5, and 6 of diary E.

An Indian stood before the commissioners clad with the most ragged garments, his hair dishevelled & his face blackened & wearing an expression of grief & fatigue. His daughter with three others had been murdered & scalped by some hostile war-party<sup>11</sup> —& he had just arrived from the scene of slaughter, his heart was sore, he said, & he could not rest until he had told his father, (the commissioner). They had been set upon by some ten men as they were travelling in a hitherto safe country & fired upon from an ambush. They at first ran & seeing no chance of escaping they returned & instant[ly] the tomahawk cleft their skulls. The wretches mutilated their bodies & escaped with the scalps. A boy, the only male with them, was closely pursued by them but 11 Goodhue, in the *Pioneer* for July 24, also mentions the arrival of the bereaved father, who he says was a Sisseton. 196 escaped by his speed & brought the news to the father who immediately set out on horseback with a fellow Sioux & found the bodies, which they collected together, threw a blanket over them & left them to the next comers, who were hourly expected, by bury them. He presented a picture of a downstricken man as he sat on the ground, his head resting between his hands & his face half concealed by long black locks of disheveled hair, Grieved, starving & fatigued.

As I stood on the highest point of the prairie I observed at the farthest teepees two objects, apparently bipeds with enormous heads, dodging about & “progressing” thro' the villages, their nearer approach & constant motion evinced by the more distinct tinkling of the bells suspended about their persons. Viewed nearer, they were Indians with the skins of the head of the buffalo with the horns attached, placed upon their shoulders & used as a mask their bodies naked to the breech-cloth painted in stripes with a pendant ornament of a skunk tail tied to the right leg. In their hands they carried lances decorated with eagle feathers. These they grasped in both hands as the[y] went at a smart pace jumping about

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& imitating the motions & grunting of the newly arrived buffalo. It was believed to be the precursor of a greater display the following day—but we were disappointed. It is the buffalo dance & is performed, to induce that animal to appear

### Buffalo Dancers

### Buffalo Dancers

199 & furnish their food. As the buffalo appears at first in small numbers & then gradually encreasing, so they imitate its habits & send two or three at first to dance & then a greater number. Buffalo are found within sixty or a hundred miles of this point. They formerly inhabited all parts of this vast country from the Atlantic west.<sup>12</sup>

12 There seems to be no evidence that the buffalo ever was found east of the Allegheny Mountains.

18. In an arbor formed of green boughs laid upon a frame work of young trees the commissioners of the U. S. & the chiefs of the Decotahs met to treat. At one end on a raised platform was placed a table behind which sat the commissioners[,] the american flag hoisted behind them a few feet from the arbor, at the sides were the secretaries, reporters & to the right & left stood & sat on the ground the traders half-breed[s] & spectators. In a semicircle in front of the commission, the chiefs were seated on benches, & the intervening space was occupied by the interpreters, & a barrell of sugar & water a favorite beverage with the Indians during warm weather stood in the midst. Behind the chiefs within & around the arbour were grouped, on foot & on horseback, on the ground & on their feet, the Dacotahs, young & old, of inferior rank, men women & children, arrayed in their best & eagerly watching the progress of the negociation. Silence & dignified characterized the assembly as the pipe was lighted by Mr 200 Alexis Bailly, the Master of ceremonies, & a few whiffs having been smoked by the commissioners it was held in succession to the mouth of each chief. [Pioneer.]<sup>13</sup>

13 The word inclosed in brackets is written in pencil.

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Mr. A. S. H. White had raised a kite greatly to the amuse[ment] of the Indian children, a crowd of whom collected around him to watch it as it soared higher & higher into the pure ether. The half-grown boys & the dogs of the Indian village are the greatest pests it has been any fortune to meet in this tour. Too old to attract by the grace & interest of childhood, they have its inquisitiveness, which uncurbed by the sense of propriety of the adult becomes impudence. They have not pride enough to cultivate personal appearance & the cleanliness which they assume with manhood is absent. Very dirty, very ugly & very mischievous.

In every village there are a race of mongrel curs, half terrier half wolf, who annoy ever[y] passer by with a volley of barks, & endanger his heels, with their teeth. By a singular contradiction the same sound with which we “set a dog on” they use to call him off from his attack. The Indian sluts during “heat” are tied for nights on the prairie where the wolves pass & the result of the intercourse is evident in the sharp ears, bushy tails, & wild eyes of the progeny.

After council a number of young men accompanied 201 by three girls & carrying their musical instruments [drums, flutes & rattles,]<sup>14</sup> came to dance the “prairie wolf” dance. This is danced by young men who have not yet killed an enemy & who have vowed to cut the hair on the sides of their head about their temples short until they have fulfilled their vow. The dance is the usual jumping “shaker” motion with singing & beating on the drum & rattling, the girls assisting with their voices in the louder portions.

14 The words inclosed in brackets are written in pencil.

On the following day a “Mandan” dance was performed by some of the chief-men of the upper Sissetons. In this, a large drum highly ornamented & supported on four sticks is beat upon by the dancers who sit in a circle around it, each one having a stick. Their voices kept time to the music & two boys of about twelve & three of four young girls sang with them during portions of the performance. After a preliminary overture on the drum the one arose related an exploit & then accompanied by two or three others danced somewhat

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in the style of a “ho-down” or hornpipe, minus the patting of the hands of the one & the variety & freedom of the latter. During his dancing the others beat & sang & when he sat down he joined in until another arose made his speech & danced. This was continued until all had spoken & they had succeeded in extorting a present of tobacco, when they retired leaving our tympanums to recover from the shock which they 202 had sustained. A large crowd[,] horsemen & foot[,] surrounded the marquee & dancers, & the setting sun bea[u]tifully *gilded* the edges of the figures in the background.

[After leaving our camp they went to the tent of Little Crow before which they repeated the first performance. As a token of his appreciation of this honor Little crow presented his bea[u]tiful head-dress of seventeen eagle-plumes to the principal chief & stated that he was sorry that it was incomplete the number of his scalps entitling him to twenty four feathers. Another Indian presented a horse to a dancer & for days after whenever the horse & his new rider approached the camp he was heard to chaunt the praises of the donor at the top of his voice.]15

15 The paragraph inclosed in brackets is written in pencil on pages 5 and 6 of diary F. It is followed by four blank pages. The final paragraph, which follows here, appears at the foot of the page on the outside back cover of diary F.

The pipe of peace is the ordinary pipe of the Indian highly ornamented. A soldier's pipe is adorned with eagle plumes & the pipe smoked on a war party has the stem stained black or red.

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### **Addenda1**

Cincinnati W[illiam] L. Sonntag.

” J[oseph] O. Eaton.

Washington Balentyne—Hall.

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New York C. Butler. No 20 Nassau Street.

" Anna C. Lynch. 45. Ninth S t

Phil a John C. Mitchell. Walnut below 8 th St.

" J. B. Cowperthwait. 253 Market.

" Phineas Banning. 135. Market

Boston— Geo. A. Richmond. 94 Staniford S t or 153 main S t S t Louis.

" W. P. W. Dana. No 7 Bulfinch pl.

Chicago. W. B. Ogden.

S t Louis Tho s Jackson.

L t Col. Bladen Dulany.2

S t Louis—city hotel—Nashville. West Newton.

Alexandria—Hill Watson.

1 Under this heading have been lists of addresses and other notations that Mayer wrote at the beginning and end of the first two volumes of his diary. Since they do not form part of the diary proper, they have been separated from the text. 2 This list of addresses is written on the inside front cover of the first volume of Mayer's diary. During his western travels the artist seems to have met some of the individuals listed: Sonntag and Eaton were Cincinnati artists; Butler, Miss Lynch, Banning, Richmond, Jackson, and Dulany were among Mayer's fellow passengers on the "Excelsior"; he probably was with Balentyne on the stage between Cumberland and Brownsville, and Hall in Louisville. See *ante*, P. 30, 44, 45, 52, 89. Dana was wellknown artist. 204

Tully Martin's—Mrs. M c Lean.

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Albany—Delavan.

I. S. M c Culloh, 37 Wall St. N. Y.

Anderson, Dodge, Swartworst, Darling, Duggan.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The foregoing list is written in pencil on the final page of volume 1 of the diary.

Balt[imore] to Pittsburg— 313. 12.00 3.50 Cincinnati— (470) 500. 6.00 fare 4.50 Louisville — (141) 150. 2.50 fare Nashville— 190. 7.00 fare 2.00 Smithland 200 1.00 fare Cairo— 63 7.00 St Louis— 177 11.00 Missouri— 180 10.00 fare 30 4.00 30 8.50 fare 10.00<sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> This table of expenses is on the inside back cover of volume 1 of the diary.

F. B. Mayer S t Paul, Minnesota. June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1851.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This notation is on the inside front cover of volume 2 of the diary. The date corresponds with that of a notation on page 3 of this volume. See *ante*, ch. 6, f. n. 13. The four lines that follow are written upside-down in pencil at the foot of the page. 205

The raft. Ohio

The Island. Moonlight Mississippi (The welcome.)

The departure.

Spanish—Texas.

The distant camp.

“ deserted ”

” Shawnee woman—camp scene The mission—Windriver Mts.

” ”

The caravan—prarie—Nebraska

## Library of Congress

The portage—Minnesota. Gabriel.

Winter The hunter's lodge " — " " Evangeline

The log-cabin. "

The sentinel.

The battle field.6

Daniels & Smith—N 6 th S t

Long's 2 Exp dn

Stanwix hall, city hall. Albany. plates of the vatican— " — Schoolcrafts' Indian in his wigwam.

Tribune buildings New York.

A. S. Barnes & Co 51 John S t make Journals &c

6 This list is written upside-down on the first page of volume 2 of the diary, facing the inside front cover. 206

Brooch. P. Chouteau J r & Co—N Y.

Lennox. N Y has a "Turner."

Phil a —Bodmer's book & plates in Graham.

C. de Monteréeville, M. D. 61 Fourth S t S t Louis M o

Mrs. N. S. Ruggles, Thames S t New Port, Rhode Island—Richmonds aunt.

[Tho s Keeling—La Crosse.]7



## Library of Congress

Col. W. C. Henderson. Piqua, Lancaster county, Pa

Dr Thomas Foster—St Paul. Minnesota 8

O my son, my son, he had pity on me He fed me, he clothed me &, when I was sick he cured me.<sup>9</sup>

7 This name and address are written in pencil. 8 The foregoing lists of addresses and notations appear on two facing pages at the front of volume 2 of Mayer's diary. The righthand pages of this volume have been numbered in pencil; the last five addresses listed here appear on page 2. The notations on the left-hand page are written in pencil. Mayer's interest in art and in western travel is reflected in some of the notations. The second expedition into the Minnesota country of Stephen H. Long, in 1823, took that explorer up the Minnesota Valley, the region that Mayer visited when he went to Traverse des Sioux. The expedition is the subject of a work by William H. Keating, entitled *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of the St. Peter's River* (Philadelphia, 1824). Henry R. Schoolcraft, Indian agent, explorer, and student of Indian life, published *The Indian in His Wigwam, or Characteristics of the Red Race of America* at Buffalo in 1848. A folio of eighty-one plates by Charles Bodmer, representing Indian life, was issued with the London edition of 1843 of *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1832-1834*, by Maximilian, prince of Wied. Henderson and Dr. Foster were members of the party that went to Traverse des Sioux. See *ante*, p. 145. 9 This notation is written in pencil at the top of a page of volume 2 facing page 64, which is blank in the original diary, Mayer quotes these remarks in his narrative, *ante*, p. 165. Some notations in pencil on page 63 are so faint that they cannot be read. 207

St Pauls to Galena—5.00

Galena to Chicago—

Chicago to Buffalo— 18.

Buffalo to Albany— 10.

Albany to Saratoga— 2.

## Library of Congress

Albany to New York— 1.50

N. York to New Port— 4.4

Tahawatona, the young buck

Chiochincha—the young ” grouse

Tiukata—the crooked horn

Ashton White—

Lahtonkahwahaghea, or the man who comes to see the buffalo.—

Henderson

[Quosta-washta—the batchelor]<sup>10</sup>

Tatonkawahaghee<sup>11</sup>

Indian prospects

<sup>10</sup> This line is crossed out in the original diary. <sup>11</sup> These accounts and names are written in pencil on a left-hand page facing the inside back cover of volume 2 of the diary. White, Henderson, and Tyler were present at the treaty negotiations at Traverse des Sioux. According to Goodhue, Tyler was known to the Indians as “Shasta Wasta.” *Pioneer*, July 17, 1851. 208

Indian religion—the contrary god.

” —

” —

” 12

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5

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5

5

5

50

20

70-85

12 These notations and the figures that follow are written in pencil on the inside back cover of volume 2 of the diary. 209

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